INTERROGATING MORAL MOTHERS, MAMA GRIZZLIES, AND WOMEN WARRIORS:
TOWARDS A QUEER TRANSNATIONAL FEMINIST ANTIMILITARISM

By

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Abstract

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This project examines the neoliberal context and public discourses that have surrounded the “War on Terror”—especially the rhetorical hijacking of feminism—and the impact on feminist antimilitarism. The primary research for this project was composed of participant observation, interviews, archival analysis, and testimonies of feminist peace activists in the United States. This project weaves activists’ voices with the existing theoretical frameworks of activism and with cultural studies analysis of public discourse. The discourse analysis builds from scholarship that establishes that beyond the model and policy of global economic expansion, neoliberalism also profoundly shapes our ideologies through cultural, social, and political acceptance of consumer choice in place of political engagement and individual autonomy in place of social welfare.

Through interviews with feminist antimilitarists, it become clear that neoliberalism acts both with and against the agency and identities of social movements; recognizing the influence of neoliberalism in social movements, I investigate the direct action tactics of current antimilitarist activism within feminist organizations operating in the United States, including
Women in Black, Code Pink, and the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom. For instance, in my analysis of social networking technologies used by peace activists and the Occupy Wall Street Movement, I argue that there has been a depoliticization of activism through the fetishization of media technology, which both offers new modes of communication and obscures the labor of organizers. In my analysis of Code Pink’s demands for a “peace budget” in place of a militarist budget, which resists the sexist and racist economics of the shrinking welfare state, I examine how it simultaneously confronts and appropriates the model of neoliberal citizenship that equates tax dollars to a vote.

Feminist antimilitarist activism and scholarship complicates the essentialist notion that men are innately militarists and women are pacifists; therefore, they offer a space to interrogate the gendered logics and assumptions about the nature and functioning of contemporary politics. This study of feminist antimilitarist activism in relation to neoliberalism offers new and complex ways of examining how culture engenders militarism and activists’ ability to dismantle it.
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INTRODUCTION

Sitting in a noisy restaurant, sharing tea before standing with the New York Union Station Women in Black in the summer of 2010, Hedy explained to me the profound role being an educator had on her continued work in the feminist antimilitarist movement, stating:

We do see our work as educational, as informing people of things they are likely to not know about or are misinformed about…We are not stopping the war machine. What we are trying to do is get people to understand that there is a peace and justice position. Get them to understand that their taxes are going to killing Palestinian children. They need to think about it because they are implicated in it. That is what we are trying to do.

Her statement points not only to the way feminists often embody multiple roles, but the way those roles are always entwined—through continual pursuits of social justice.

Later that evening, after standing with the Women in Black of Union Square, I called a dear friend and colleague and explained how powerful it felt to share a space with these courageous women, and more importantly how empowering their stories were. While writing this dissertation from a space of academic privilege, these stories and shared experiences with feminist peace activists remained a source of inspiration.

In many ways there is an inevitably entwined relationship between the act of theorizing and activism, this dualist logic is a false one that too frequently separates the ultimate aspirations of feminist political efforts: social change. While I have experienced the fissure between theory and action in both activist and academic spaces, it is my hope to avoid rehashing these divisive debates. What Hedy expresses in her sentiment about peace organizing as pedagogy speaks to the way that our separate spaces are not that disparate. While I acknowledge the complexity of
identities surrounding activist and academic spaces, I also respect the potential for solidarity towards creating revolutionary change by opposing militarism and war.

**Origins of the Project**

My “feminist curiosity” became aroused the first day I stepped into a Women’s Studies classroom and I started to see the process of performing gender all around me (Enloe, *Maneuvers*). It is from this desire to investigate gendered power that I became involved with two local community groups: College Feminists and the local Eau Claire Peace and Justice Coalition. Both offered a politicized space to begin bridging across difference. College Feminists mostly revolved around dialogue and actions for increased access to reproductive health care, sexual liberation, and ending sexual assault, while the Peace and Justice Coalition brought together activists to discuss the urgency of ending the imperialist wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and U.S. funding of the Israeli Occupation of Palestine. They had a small rally every Wednesday starting in 2003, which I joined in 2004, and where I met people involved in the Democratic Party, Unitarian Universalists, Quakers, environmentalists, and women involved in Women in Black, a women’s anti-war network, the women involved in Women in Black remained the most inspiring to me.

In these early experiences of finding progressive communities to collectively work toward social justice, I found my passion for anti-racist, anti-imperialist, and feminist scholarship, which continues to be sources of motivation for me, especially when social change seems to be waning. In 2008, when I began thinking about my dissertation project, there had just been a surge of U.S. troops sent to Iraq, the bombing of Gaza had been constant from May 2007 and well into 2008, and civilian and soldier casualties were ever-increasing in both Iraq and
Afghanistan. There seemed to be, and in many ways still seems to be, no end in sight for U.S. militarism. Graduate school has been a time for me to more fully interrogate power and the connections between militarism and feminist resistance. In June of 2008 I returned to the community that had been integral to my continued interest in social justice to meet with some of the first women anti-war activists I had stood with, the Eau Claire community Women in Black.

This project is an attempt to understand feminist antimilitarists’ and peace activists’ work in relation to the political and cultural economy of neoliberalism, as well as interrogate my own existence within the frameworks of theory and action. Working in coalitional and intergenerational communities has taught me that social actions exist in tandem with the societal contexts they often contend. Often we are told, as Bob Dylan so prophetically stated, “The times they are a-changing,” but how has the temporality of militarism changed between the Vietnam-era antiwar movement and today’s opposition to U.S. imperial belligerence? And if times are changing, how must feminist antimilitarists engender new activist methodologies within the context of neoliberalism?

In this dissertation, I am interested in examining not just how theory informs activism, but how practice has the potential to complicate theory. As Noël Sturgeon points out in Ecofeminist Natures, there are necessary critiques to make of both feminist theory and activism; however, all too often academia is presented as self-reflexive of essentialism, while activists are constructed as the perpetrators of essentialist formations (6). Situating myself within the very work of feminist antimilitarist activism, as Sturgeon so does, is integral to both critiquing and celebrating feminist labor done for anti-imperialism. It is within these constructive examinations and critiques of the context for social action that we may move toward more engaged politics,
asking, “How can we understand social movements in ways that capture their contradictions, their deployment of theory-in-practice, their contextual sensibilities?” (Sturgeon 3).

This project seeks to contextualize feminist antimilitarist activism within the culture and political economy of neoliberalism, and to explore activism’s relationship as a site that both contends with and reproduces cultural processes of neoliberalism. Oppositions to the structures of neoliberalism and militarism evolve in the same social and economic context; for instance, later chapters will analyze activists’ appropriation of consumer-based actions in peace organizing and its precarious relationship direct actions. My goal is simultaneously to challenge the consumer-based politics of neoliberalism and to support feminist antimilitarist actions. By recognizing the extremely powerful practices and methods used by U.S.-based activists, but remaining critical of neoliberalism’s limitations, I hope to offer valuable insights to forthcoming social change movements.

The Making of Neoliberal “Equality”

The contemporary paradigm of the global economy is politically and culturally crafted out of the same exploitative disparities colonialism produced using the ideologies and structures of liberalism. Neoliberalism, a political, cultural, and economic process, is the contemporary model that made possible the U.S. imperialist wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. These wars have been met with a great deal of activist resistance, but the cultural context in the U.S. has both silenced and appropriated these various anti-racist, feminist, queer, and anti-imperialist activisms. I argue that we must understand these forms of activism in order to construct future social justice.
Neoliberalism has its roots in seventeenth century Anglo-European-centric notions of liberalism, which Adam Smith theorized as a “free” market capitalist economy working without many governmental intrusions (Harvey 20). This ideology prevailed in the United States until the 1930s, when government became a more central social figure due to the Depression, expanding internationally after 1944 when the formation of the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and GATT were created for postwar reconstruction and wealth distribution. Not coincidentally, this coincided with Nationalist uprising in the colonized Global South. These economic institutions remain U.S. and Euro-centric through policies that ensure Third World crippling debt and the Global North’s continued exploitation of natural resources, labor, and economy of the Global South. The economic philosophies of neoliberalism were expanded ideologically through South America via education of the Chicago School in the 1960s, and even further set by repressive politics and coups established by the U.S. as means of dismantling communist transformation (Klein 75-78). As David Harvey has argued, neoliberalism must be interpreted as the reorganization of international capitalisms in order to reestablish a hegemonic political order, or as Harry Magdoff theorizes “U.S. imperialism without Colonies” (Harvey 36). However, United States imperialism and nation-state hegemony cannot exist without flexible boundaries, whereby capital, labor, and culture can be exploited beyond national boundaries, and those who define the means of production remain undefined by nation-states but are tied to transnational links, which are in turn bound to nation-state politics. For this reason, I spend the entirety of this project examining transnational operations of capitalism, not as monolithic power constructs, but as systems and spaces that exist in economic/cultural contradictions. It is within these contradictions that social movements have voiced dissent and have also seen their voices reify the very structures they stand against.
Within neoliberalism businesses operate with little governmental interference, such as labor and environmental regulations. The main tenets of neoliberalism include free trade, economic and governmental deregulation, privatization, reduction in social welfare, and a general belief in individual responsibility and risk, rather than public good and community response (Miller 23). The economic institutions of the IMF, World Bank, and World Trade Organization (WTO, formerly known as GATT) ensured that these policies became entrenched in economic policies for structural adjustment programs and global labor and trading practices. Beyond a model and policy of global economic expansion, neoliberalism also profoundly shapes our ideologies through the cultural, social, and political acceptance of consumer choice in place of political engagement or citizenship rights, and individual autonomy in place of social welfare (Duggan; Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*; Enloe, *Globalization and Militarism*; Miller).

Harvey historicizes that full neoliberalization occurred through the “culture wars,” or the political and rhetorical use of difference as a vice for othering that was constructed under Thatcher and Reagan (205). Borrowing from Antonio Gramsci’s theories of hegemony, Harvey argues that in order for neoliberalism to become economically viable it had to also be culturally accepted through notions of “common sense.” Common sense is constructed through already existing social formations that are deeply rooted in traditional values (Harvey 39). For instance, both Reagan and Thatcher used the rhetoric of religious fundamentalism and family values to sell the need to protect both the self and the nation. Lauren Berlant refers to this as the intimate public sphere, where public discourses are articulated through our private-sphere existences, and are deeply entrenched in white, heterosexual constructions of the nation and family, as they play off of the fears of a racist and homophobic public (Berlant 3-5). Reagan exploited the deep
investment in whiteness present in the cultural nationalism of white working class people, using the discourse of “reverse racism” to insist that affirmative action policies and social programs had marginalized white people (Harvey 50). This rhetoric is tied to contemporary discourses as well, anti-feminist and white supremacist ideologies have been used to claim that democrats or “liberals” have stolen taxpayers’ money to fund their politics of special interest groups (for instance people of color, single mothers, women’s reproductive health care and LGBTQ people), while obscuring corporate tax breaks and power.

The formation of neoliberal hegemony, Lisa Duggan argues, was an intervention against the strongly governmentally shaped and backed New Deal, which had constructed jobs for communities dispossessed and impoverished during the Depression. Neoliberal politicians attacked civil rights, feminist, and nationalist movements that have argued for increased distribution of wealth to oppressed groups (XII). Economically, neoliberalism has thrived through the creation of pro-business politics upheld by economic institutions, which have been accepted and obscured through the U.S. culture wars. It is out of these ‘80s culture wars that tactics of assimilation were politically and culturally enforced to construct a “multicultural” citizenship, or a notion of neoliberal “equality.” This, Duggan argues, is based in the liberal democratic theory of individual access and liberty as a means to equality; however, what neoliberal equality actually offered was a “stripped-down, non redistributive form of ‘equality’ designed for global consumption during the twenty-first century, and compatible with continued upward redistribution of resources” (Duggan XII).

The melding of political, economic, and cultural neoliberal formations has ensured that these processes remain inextricably linked. All the while, past social movements are “taken into account,” but also appropriated to ensure a commodification of activism and dominant culture
Neoliberalism especially thrives in the United States because it is the economic basis for both political parties, which differ slightly in cultural ideologies and falsely offer two different versions of an imperial neoliberal process. While the U.S. conservative political commentators increasingly discuss domestic “class warfare,” issues of race, class, gender, and sexuality are viewed as private, cultural issues (similar to the Reagan and Thatcher arguments), but what this negates is the fact that hierarchies of oppression are the very places in which economy works. For this reason it is necessary that culture and economy be viewed in relationship to one another and not in a hierarchy of economy in which the material is more politically and immediately important than culture, which is defined through social values and artifacts.

As I have briefly laid out here, the history of formulating neoliberalism out of existing roots of oppression has been required for its hegemony, but the permeable divisions between public/private and culture/economy have also been necessary to bolster the ideological acceptance of and consent to neoliberal reform. Redefining the public and private under neoliberalism has been necessary to privatizing risk and personal responsibility, which furthermore become coded as individual agency and freedom. Both postracial and postfeminist claims made in the U.S. and in Europe are based in constructions of racism, sexism, and homophobia as private matters, because these are issues that have been addressed through policy, and therefore oppression, a form of social punishment, must be representative of individual fault.

Part of the culture wars under Reagan was the backlash to feminism and previous civil rights claims. Angela McRobbie has argued that, while there was a conservative response to feminism, backlash does not fully engage the level to which certain aspects of feminist discourse and activism were taken into account by the state in order to construct neoliberal and
exceptionalist claims. “Drawing on a vocabulary that includes words like ‘empowerment’ and ‘choice,’ these elements are then converted into much more individualistic discourse, and they are deployed in the new guise, particularly in media and popular culture, but also by agencies of the state, as a kind of substitute for feminism” (McRobbie 1). Feminism thereby is used in a claim by Western governments to suggest their superiority over “other” patriarchal governments or nations, as was done in the theft of feminist rhetoric to “save women” by invading Afghanistan. Yet, the very notion of a postfeminism insists upon the neoliberal subject, constructed as white, making the “right” choice, because they are given “choices;” hence, risk becomes privatized and individualized, and victims of sexism are to blame for their own individualized decisions.

Expanding McRobbie, David Eng argues that the current postraciality claimed in the U.S. derived from the single act of electing President Barack Obama and is based on a dismissal of racial hierarchies as well as homophobia. Building from Duggan’s theorization of new homonormativity, which he understands as “a politics that does not contest dominant heteronormative assumptions and institutions, but upholds and sustains them [to create]…a privatized, depoliticized gay culture anchored in domesticity and consumptions,” Eng argues that queer liberalism is constructed around the gay white, middle class communities as naturalized subjects, while pitting that very acceptance on existing racial and class biases. Governments can deny those violences, just as McRobbie suggests, by making oppression a private issue under privatized citizenship, so privatized heteronormative families become the norm (Berlant 16). Racial desegregation “occurred” in 1954 in Brown v. the Board of Education, and decriminalization of sodomy was codified in 2003 through Lawrence v. Texas, making it possible to claim racism and homophobia as former discriminations, which further deregulates
the accountability of the nation-state and obscures the reliance on racism, sexism, and heterosexism in the political economy of neoliberalism.

Inderpal Grewal argues that the strength of U.S. imperialism through neoliberalism is that it is not contained solely by nation-state borders. For instance, as transnational allies, Thatcher and Reagan were able to utilize divergently different cultural formations to push through neoliberal agendas that equally benefited the U.S. and Great Britain. Grewal’s analysis, extending from this existing history, shows that neoliberalism in the ‘90s utilized a multicultural framework of “equality” to establish a new market logic with concern for reducing social welfare services and poverty, and by extension appropriated and utilized the languages of feminism and civil-rights, which became essential to the geopolitical commercialization of the consumer citizen (15-16). The consumer citizen is not solely bound to the U.S., but rather nationalism has changed over time so that transnational connections based in cultural consumption can occur. The consumer citizen is one who can access political voice through purchase, or can evade social risk by proper market “choices” (Eng; Grewal, Transnational America; Miller).

In the current era of neoliberalism, consumer culture is the predominant terrain for shaping national and imperial identity. What makes consumer culture so insidiously productive is the way in which it has engaged the languages of liberal democracy in “rights” and “choices” to tie identities and social movements to the formations of colonial underpinnings and globalized economic capitalism. Post 9/11 we have seen the Orientalist logics of racialized and gendered subjects rearticulated in the neoliberal practices of self-regulation that reify consumer culture (Grewal 32). These formations are directly tied to U.S. media and governmental support of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.
It has become clear that neoliberalism acts both with and against the agency and identities of social movements, such as claims for “women’s rights as human rights,” which are rooted in Western values of democratic subjectivity, and have been used to make universalist claims for women and construct modern gendered subjects. We need to remain cognizant of the underlying mechanisms that inform cultural claims. As Sarah Banet-Weiser and Roopali Mukherjee, scholars of consumer citizenship, have argued, these shifting modes of meaning impact social action. They ask, “What…does it mean to ‘do activism’ in a sociocultural context increasingly defined by neoliberal ideas about self-reliance, entrepreneurial individualism, and economic responsibility?” (2). In order to situate feminist antimilitarist and peace activism in this ever-shifting terrain of neoliberal cultural/political/and economic formations, I will outline the connections of the changing nation-state structure to transnational flows of capitalism, commodity fetishization, and militarism. Most importantly, I will examine the feminist critiques of neoliberal economics and capitalism that are foundational to antimilitarist activism.

**Neoliberal Militarism, Imperialism, and Feminist Antimilitarism**

As part of an examination of feminist critiques of neoliberalism, the project offers a careful analysis of the broader neoliberal cultural context and public discourse that have surrounded the wars, especially the rhetorical hijacking of feminism. Therefore, a primary objective of this project is to explore how US activists are resisting the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and the “War on Terror,” and specifically to what extent they may be working in transnational alliances to resist the culture and economics of militarism and neoliberal globalization writ large.
Neoliberal economic globalization is a tool of imperialist endeavor. As John Bellamy Foster articulates in the introduction of Harry Magdoff’s *Imperialism Without Colonies*, current U.S. military presence in the Middle East is economically and politically based:

At present, U.S. imperialism appears particularly blatant because it is linked directly with war in this way, and points to an endless series of wars in the future to achieve essentially the same ends. However, if we wish to understand the underlying forces at work, we should not let this heightened militarism and aggression distract us from the inner logic of imperialism, most evident in the rising gap in income and wealth between rich and poor countries, and in the net transfers of economic surplus from periphery to center that make this possible. The growing polarization of wealth and poverty between nations (a polarization that exists within nations as well) is the system’s crowning achievement on the world stage. It is also what is ultimately at issue in the struggle against modern imperialism. As Magdoff argues in *Imperialism without Colonies*, there is an essential oneness to economic, political, and military domination under capitalism. (Foster in Magdoff 18)

Economic neoliberalism is the process by which borders are simultaneously broken and erected; thus, it increases the movement of capital while exploiting labor through the economic policies of the IMF, World Bank, and WTO. These processes exacerbate the existing inequities of colonialism, furthering financial instability, exploitation of resources, and economic inequality. Neoliberal militarism— which I define as the development of a systemic ideology of political, economic, and military institutions in order to proliferate and normalize the culture of war and violence—is used as a support mechanism to create these social conditions. Deeply invested in militarism, the military-industrial complex is also promoted by globalization, whereby military
spending and liberalization of the arms trade increases the manufacturing and proliferation of weaponry. Corporations such as Lockheed Martin, Boeing, and Halliburton benefit from liberalization, and have become transnational in arms production and sales (Staples 21). This transnational movement of capital is a major factor driving the global war economy and imperialist endeavors of war.

Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan describe this transnational flow of capital and production as the postmodernity of late capitalism, which is the “rise of postmodernist cultural forms, the emergence of more flexible modes of capital accumulation, and a new round of ‘time-space compression’ in the organization of capitalism” (Harvey qtd. in Grewal and Kaplan 4). They propose that new modes of accumulation suggest a need for new forms of resistance, resistance that remains attentive to new cultural forms. Grewal has further examined this idea in Transnational America, where she analyzes how transnational connectivities constitute “a web of connections that moved along historicized trajectories” and more specifically defines the action of globalization as it exploits nationalisms’ historical connections to current economic and cultural exchanges (22). Such connections are evident in the U.S. political, economic and militarist support of neoliberal free trade. This is a postmodern system, whereby capital is moved across borders to maximize accumulation in a unified global marketplace. Support is evident in the imperialist agenda of the Project for a New American Century, a group of neo-conservative politicians and businessmen who have rallied for continued neo-colonial dominance in pursuit of an “American global leadership” (Cockburn, From Where We Stand 49). Members of the PNAC, such as Donald Rumsfeld and Dick Cheney, solidified these ideologies as U.S. policy and practice while serving as members of the Bush administration.
Many U.S. peace activists supported President Barack Obama’s election in 2008, and he even became the recipient of the 2009 Nobel Peace Prize. However, in September 2009, a day prior to his award, the Pentagon announced it was hastening the creation of bunker busters to threaten Iran in support of U.S. ally Israel (Chomsky 172). Obama has also upheld the mystique of militarized “National Security” in his December 31, 2011 signing of the National Defense Authorization Act, which allows for indefinite detention of American citizens without due process. In many ways his perpetual backing and building of U.S. militarism speaks to the politics of neoliberalism. Obama has been racially attacked as an “activist,” “Muslim,” and “socialist” President, which has obscured his complicity in the project of neoliberal militarism. Rampant drone use in Pakistan and Afghanistan speaks to this reality. The simultaneous corporate takeover of Congress has continued to favor the Pentagon and military contractors.

Post-September 11, 2001 the PNAC has consistently encouraged militarism to “challenge regimes hostile to our interests and values” in escalating the “War on Terror” (Cockburn, From Where We Stand 50). President Obama’s election has furthered, not stifled, this challenge with the use of new drone technology and heightened tensions with Iran. This war has been waged against any group that opposes U.S. hegemony, and allies of U.S. transnational corporations have also benefited from this war through contracts to rebuild Iraqi infrastructure and gain access to Iraq’s oil resources. This fact evidences the way in which militarist endeavors move in tandem with economic globalization. The U.S. imperialist endeavors in Afghanistan and Iraq have gendered, racialized, and sexualized implications. The “War on Terror” has ensured that military and economic policy advances the systemic exploitation of capitalist accumulation on the backs of women and people of color. For instance, women in countries attacked by the U.S. have been disproportionately affected by the feminization of poverty, while people of color and immigrants
have been racially profiled and attacked in the United States under the guise of protection (Fernandes 57). For this reason, it is necessary for activists, scholars, and public policy advocates to recognize the importance of modes of capitalism for the major role they play in the violation of human rights when discussing militarism.

Throughout this project’s analysis I use the language of feminist antimilitarism as an umbrella terminology for actions and theories that seek to dismantle a culture that reproduces and normalizes the functions of neoliberal militarism. A most thorough definition is provided by Ilene Rose Feinman’s *Citizenship Rites*:

Feminist antimilitarist analyses teach us that the military is a deeply masculinist institution. Feminist antimilitarist analyses suggest that motivations for war are lodged in the traditional modalities of economic and political domination and sexual conquest, and the masculinist dynamic of militarist discourse. Feminist antimilitarist analyses and activisms uncover the violence of military diplomacy as it affects civilians, as it shapes the sex-workplace around military bases, and as it destroys communities and ecosystems. Feminist antimilitarism connects peace activism more precisely to justice struggles and, last but in no way least, feminist antimilitarist direct action has also influenced policy via participation in broad public opposition to the nuclear industries and to war. (Feinman 2)

As Feinman articulates, feminist antimilitarism is a lens for framing and understanding the impacts of militarism, as well as approaches to social change. A common analysis of feminist antimilitarist theory and action recognizes militarism as inextricably linked to imperialist, racist, classist, sexist, and homophobic violence.¹

¹ The following scholars offer a further examination of feminist analysis of militarism: Cockburn, *From Where We Stand* and *Antimilitarism*; Cook and Kirk, *Greenham Women Everywhere*; Di Leonardo; Crystal and Max Eastmann, *Toward the Great Change*; Eisenstein,
Feminist antimilitarism, as articulated by such organizations as Women in Black (WiB), Code Pink, and Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), acknowledges the gendered impacts of the “Holy Trinity of militarism,”—hierarchy, rivalry, and masculinity—which has violent outcomes for women in the U.S. and abroad (Enloe, *Maneuvers* 32). Gender operates in our lives and through institutions, ensuring that women experience war whether it is as mothers, partners, victims or soldiers. Militarism disproportionately affects women; while men are also affected, women’s material realities place them closer to these harms. It is this perspective, rather than some innate sense of women’s perception of the immorality of war, that binds women-based peace activism strategically. It is predominantly women’s bodies that are raped as symbolic battlefields and civilian women and children who are killed and disguised as “collateral damage” (Cockburn, *From Where We Stand* 16). During and after war the climate of militarism gives way to domestic violence and rape among those in military service.

Environmental degradation connected to war affects women because the sexual division of labor often places them in the role of domestic labor or collecting food, water, and fodder, which becomes more difficult to find during war (Seager 17-19). These tasks also put them closer to environmental toxins. Toxins like depleted uranium and herbicides are often used in war and are known to cause spontaneous abortions, birth defects, and a multitude of other health problems. Finally the neoliberal economy, which benefits militarism, demands cuts in social programs, such as health care, resources and education, used mostly by women for their families. Clearly the interlocking oppressions of neoliberal militarism and imperialism are connected to systemic patriarchy and devaluation of women’s lives.

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*Sexual Decoys*; Enloe, *Does Khaki Become You?, The Curious Feminist*, and *Globalization and Militarism*; Feinman; Seager; Sturgeon, “Theorizing Movements.”
Not every activist or action I analyze under the umbrella of “feminist antimilitarism” has used this language or label. Still, I find the intersectional theoretical analysis and approach of antimilitarism as the most encompassing and holistic language to approach actions also commonly defined as “anti-war,” “antimilitarism,” and “peace.” Antimilitarism is a much more effective language and analysis than simply understanding the aims as “anti-war,” as it acknowledges the institutional reproduction and naturalization of the military as embedded within culture and economics. Societal complacency to militarism has much larger ramifications when examined through the historical and continued imperial ambitions of the United States. It is through this system that our gendered political system accepts, invests, and lauds war and killing as the only valid mechanism for “national security” and protection. The system of militarism is embedded in globalized capitalism, military institutions, policy, and political decisions.

Methodological Approach

I used a range of methods for this project; the chapters are based on qualitative interviews, contextual analysis, and discourse analysis. In this section I lay out the meaning of “archive” and “texts” that I analyze, and also trace the theoretical intentions of my participant observation and open-ended interviews, which I conducted between 2008-2011 with activists from Wisconsin, New York, Colorado, and Washington to examine local feminist actions as responses to a militarized global economy.

Throughout this project I juxtapose contemporary memes, popular culture, and political discourse analysis with activists statements and actions. My intent is to relate how everyday

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2 See Appendix A, B, and C for further information on interviewing methods.
communication, images, and dominant rhetoric is pivotal to the cultural acceptance of neoliberalism and militarism. As Berlant argues in her methodological approach to analyzing national culture, mainstream documents and discourses should not be disregarded as ‘‘mere’’ fiction or fantasy but as violence and desire that have material effects” (Berlant 13). I too maintain that cultural artifacts, or an “archive” of materials produced within a cultural context, are to be taken seriously, and by paralleling them in relation to activism the dialectic tension might offer new strategies for social change. I also take the activist goals and methods to be texts. As T.V. Reed establishes in the methodology of his historicization of U.S. social movements, “the texts I am interested in most are the movements themselves, with their cultural productions as a means to that end” (Reed xvii). Examining activism as a cultural production is a move away from positivist epistemologies that privilege “objective” analysis and justifies the foundation of colonial mentalities.

Women in Black’s movement through a “web of connections” is one reason I first became inspired by their actions (Grewal 22). While I originally intended to only interview women involved in WiB, I quickly realized that feminist antimilitarism and peace work grows through a web of connections, meaning that many activists I met with had connections with WiB and multiple other activist communities. While I offer some history here on WiB, I also offer contextual information within the chapters about other networks including Code Pink, antinuclear activists, Peace and Justice League of Spokane (PJALS) and Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF).

Women in Black, originating in 1988 in Israel as a resistance to the occupation of Palestine, involved women standing in busy streets wearing black with placards stating: “End the Occupation.” Soon after women around the world began standing in solidarity, and have adapted
this model according to community needs. For instance, vigils have also been used to protest the wars in Bosnia, apathy to homelessness in San Francisco in the U.S., neo-Nazism, xenophobia, and racism against migrant workers in Germany (Svirsky 115-117). Vigils around the world now are also used to stand against the proliferation of U.S. violence in Iraq and Afghanistan (Cockburn, From Where We Stand 52). Women in Black has spread all over the world to engender actions against war, sexism, and racism.

Another important component to WiB communities in the U.S. is the exemplification of Chandra Talpade Mohanty’s concept of comparative feminist studies or a feminist solidarity model, which encourages an interrogation of “relations of mutuality, corresponsibility, and common interest” (Mohanty, “Feminist Encounters” 242). The way in which WiB efforts are mobilized to fit the community they are located in is important for women in the U.S., as they stand in opposition to the very politics that threaten women’s lives in the US, through domestic violence in military families, the high incidence of rape among female soldiers, and the silencing of these women’s voices, with a recognition of the fact that they are implicated and privileged within this U.S. imperialist project. Mohanty argues that this model is attentive to “…power, each historical experience illuminates the experiences of the others”:

Thus, the focus is not just on the intersections of race, class, gender, nation, and sexuality in different communities of women but on mutuality and coimplication, which suggests attentiveness to the interweaving of the histories of these communities…. learning about points of connection and distance among and between communities of women marginalized and privileged along numerous local and global dimensions. (242-243)

This model of feminist activism is important to the ways in which I conduct my research of women involved in WiB, because I too am greatly committed to anti-imperialist feminist social
justice. As a researcher it is important for me to recognize the way that my positionality informs my relationship to the women I interview in WiB communities. Nancy Naples has argued that this attention is a form of “embodied perspective,” whereby a researcher recognizes their particular social location in relation to the community being researched (197).

This investigation is U.S.-based research of women’s politicization, community activism and feminist praxis. It is my wish to explore women’s experiences with Women in Black and the way that they engender their lived experiences in relation to their community and understanding of anti-imperialist and feminist politics, rather than make assertions about how all women experience activism. It is my hope, as a feminist activist researcher utilizing a qualitative method, that I can challenge the dualities between researcher and researched, subject and object.

My first concern was to be sure that women were free to tell their stories using their own language. Therefore, the terminology used in my questions was very important. Rather than impose that WiB work was feminist, I asked if women identified as feminist and how that played a role in their work with WiB. This methodological strategy ensures that I [the writer] remain “in the background and becomes embedded in the narrative rather than acting in the scene. The reader hears the writer’s words, envisions the scenes, and attends to the story, not the story teller” as to avoid creating new exclusionary processes that exploit these women’s voices and to ensure that I do not speak for these women (Charmaz and Mitchell 1997 qtd. in Naples 32).

Feminist researchers have critically analyzed the insider/outsider dichotomy while conducting fieldwork in communities. As Naples has argued, this binary masks power differentials and hides the interactive process that exists through the production of “insider” and “outsider.” These are not fixed positions; rather, there is some fluidity between the two. One way that feminist ethnographers have approached this binary is through self-disclosure of their
identity. This practice allows for the interviewee to have some power, as she is not the only one divulging personal narratives. When I provided some self-disclosure during interviews, I found that participants felt better able to pose questions to me about my work and interests. It also made interviews a participatory dialogue, instead of an interrogation. In this sense, participants became “co-researchers” on activism (Reinharz 33).

Some more theoretical concerns that arose through my studies of similar feminist and queer methods made me reconsider an approach that solely relies on activists’ voices through interviews. Judith Halberstam argues, a “scavenger methodology” would be the process of employing different methodological strategies to engender information “on subjects who have been deliberately or accidentally excluded from traditional studies of human behavior” (Female Masculinity 13). This proposed queer methodology actively refutes the concept of an objective method and dismantles the concept of an authentic voice coming from one particular method. Instead, scavenger methodology uses multiple strategies to examine subject positioning.

As Lynn Fujiwara discovered when researching Asian immigrant mothers, sometimes it is difficult to dismantle the power of the researcher/participant binary. Through her attempts to interview mothers (without formal citizenship), she found she was causing terror in the very community whose systemic oppression she was trying to expose and realized she had to address this methodological and ethical problem. By assuming there is an authentic voice that feminist researchers can draw from a woman, we reify the concept of an objective form of subjective research. Fujiwara had to rethink the notion of voice altogether, thereby “complicating what gets counted as voice” (Fujiwara qtd. in Thoma). In order to examine the experiences of these women, she defined testimony as something more fluid, using activist’s e-mails, interviews, immigrant documents, letters, and field notes. She found that, by “weaving” these texts and
testimonies together, she could construct a more complete story about women’s experiences under oppressive social policies. This gave her the “opportunity to show the possibilities for more complex and intersecting discussions interdisciplinary work can encompass” (Fujiwara qtd. in Thoma).

After thinking about Fujiwara and Halberstam’s urge to create more interdisciplinary ways to tell a story, I thought about some of the strategies I had ignored, and also some that I hadn’t even realized were strategies. Some sources that I had been using to examine women’s peace activism as a transnational space were the translations of the 2003 Belgrade Women in Black conference; WiB, Code Pink, and WILPF website narratives; the literature for events that I attended; activists’ placards; documentary footage; and citations from newspapers and blogs. These pieces were all testimony to the multitude of women’s “voices” that had been rendered invisible. I realized the most important approach to documenting the story of U.S. women’s activism was through entwining these components. Also, in utilizing popular culture and public discourses in relation to activists’ voices, I am able to contextualize activism within the cultural terrain of neoliberalism. By using multiple modes of methodology, I can be sure that I do not privilege what Joan Scott articulates as unmediated “experience,” which is a way of denying the process through which our identities and surroundings are socially constructed (“The Evidence of Experience” 773-776). Finally, using a multi-site I am able to recognize the layers at play in doing research—power, oppression, and resistance.

I conducted seventeen interviews with women in the U.S., starting with women in Wisconsin, because it was a community I still felt connected to through activism. In order to

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3 Throughout the chapters I use first names to describe these women’s activism and stories. Most women are described in self-chosen pseudonyms; however, some women preferred to use their own names. I respect this desire as the right of an interviewee. I have not distinguished
find more women to interview, I used a snowball sample method, a process that employs research into participants’ social networks to access specific populations. This technique allowed me to create a sample of women who were connected through a web of activism, growing like a snowball. In New York, Colorado, and Washington, I contacted groups via their e-mail addresses, which I found through activist blogs and websites and received through contacts from other activists and academics. It is significant to me that many of the activists I contacted were suggestions from academics and mentors. As Laura Briggs argues in “Activisms and Epistemologies,” there has long been a power differential between academics and activists. Heeding her important words of figuring out “how to write a politics of solidarity or identification from such admittedly compromised locations [the Academy], which is different from trying to speak for a movement or even from a political movement” (92). My reliance on academics to connect me to these communities speaks to a politics of solidarity located in the academy. The snowball form of sampling is often used because the population under investigation is “hidden” due to low numbers of participants or the systemic silencing of their voices. It also mimics the growing of an activist network within my methodology.

I also used information gathered while standing with the New York City vigils and activist meeting in Spokane, WA. Participant observation illuminated the importance of activist voices and provided insights about the dynamics that exist between activists. These experiences informed me about the necessary solidarity amongst activists in local groups. For instance, in Spokane, WA, I marched with the Peace and Justice League in the local “Slut Walk” and then attended a Theater of the Oppressed workshop. In New York City I was welcomed into two groups and after shared coffee with several members. This tactic also allowed me to hear between pseudonyms and women who chose to keep their names as a way to protect confidentiality.
multiple voices and more readily understand differences that exist within the group. One way in which some WiB groups make decisions, like whether to fly a nation’s flag at a vigil or to add a new placard, is through a developed system of “making a round.” This literally means going around the room so each woman’s voice can be heard before a decision is made (Svirsky 122). Activist settings allow women to have similar interactions.

Working as a feminist researcher has taught me that even while politicizing the methods of analyzing activists’ narratives, all power imbalances cannot be eliminated. Regardless of the methodologies used, some voices are still unheard, because power still exists within feminist methodology. Still, by expanding my vision of “voice” following Fujiwara, I am able to tell a more holistic story. The use of weaving multiple narratives—interviews, documentary clips, interviews within texts about WiB, and the WiB website—has allowed me to follow the trajectory of the global network WiB. Asking participants in my study “how does your location in the U.S. change your perception of what Women in Black does?” asks women to speak to their experiences of living under U.S. patriarchy as well as being implicated within the U.S. imperialist project. Mohanty’s argument for a feminist solidarity model that encourages a commitment to understanding one’s position within power, privilege, and resistance is practiced when women and activists are able to speak to their own “politics of location” (Rich qtd in Mohanty, “Feminist Encounters” 461).

Framework and Chapter Summaries

Feminist antimilitarist activism is a site that both contends with and reproduces processes of neoliberalism. My methods of interviewing and participant observation with feminist antimilitarist and peace activists’ resistance to imperialism offers a unique perspective to
articulate the slippages between activist methodologies and social formations. By pulling dominant themes from activists concerns with the changing political terrain, I have been able to apply multiple methodologies, through studying activist archives and examining that work and history in relation to popular culture and discourses.

As Michel Foucault argues in *The History of Sexuality*, “Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power;” hence, the resistances to the very structures of neoliberalism and militarism, which are inextricably linked, grow within the same social and economic context (95). Studying the contradictions and democratic potentialities of activist responses to militarism and neoliberalism offers unique ways to address historically and contemporarily entrenched notions of “equality,” because activism does not exist in a vacuum, but rather is shaped and remolded by the very power it seeks to dismantle. For this reason, the chapters are organized thematically to examine the modes of production in neoliberalism—commercialization, marketization, privatization of risk, and the relinquishment of the welfare state. I will probe the connection and resistances between feminist antimilitarist activism, the social formations of neoliberal citizenship in the U.S. nation-state, and U.S. imperialism as transnationally constructed through the neoliberal economy.

**Chapter One:**

Chapter One offers an examination of the commercialization of radical activism. This examination begins with an investigation of the appropriation of activism and public space, the roots of queer and feminist antimilitarist activism in Occupy Wall Street, and the use of spectacle and performance in past and current activism. The chapter concludes with an analysis of the effects of commercialized activism on feminist antimilitarists’ subjectivities; specifically, I
investigate a theme of intergenerational disarticulation I found in the interviews I conducted, and how consumer culture plays a role in these narratives.

Chapter Two:

This chapter provides a focus on the historical and contemporary role of “motherhood methodologies” in women’s anti-war activism. I examine the role of marketizing neoliberal feminine subjectivities through motherhood in an analysis of Angelina Jolie, Madonna, and Sarah Palin’s “Mama Grizzlies.” Using queer theoretical critiques I argue that mobilizing motherhood as a means to oppose militarism in the contemporary political and cultural climate risks upholding white, straight-centric biopolitics, rather than resisting these modes of nation-building violence.

Chapter Three:

Chapter Three critiques popular discourses of modernity and progress through the individualized narratives and imagery of gendered, raced, and sexually mixed militaries. I examine popular culture and media discourses about women in the military, military families, and gay and lesbian soldiers in relation to feminist antimilitarist activists’ critiques of equality feminism, or arguments for women’s inclusion in the military and the repeal of Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell homophobic policies. I contend that femininity and definitions of female empowerment under neoliberal cultural citizenship are intentionally constructed as multiple rather than universal in order to render gendered power dynamics ambiguous and at times non-existent. This chapter seeks to address how females and sexual minorities become objectified in narratives of modernity in the creation of imperial democracy.
Chapter Four:

The final and fourth chapter examines the U.S. economic and socio-political context of the “War on Women” as a case study that illuminates how feminist antimilitarist practices interrogate the roots of militarism as gendered/raced/classed. It expands existing scholarship on the history of U.S. peace movements and the transnational turn in Women’s Studies and American Studies, by pointing to actions that complicate simplistic formulas of “local”/“global” and “national”/“transnational.” The activists I interviewed were aware of the “War on Women” as central to their own demands of antimilitarism and had been actively organizing against it prior to the 2012 election season. Finally, this chapter provides examples of how feminist antimilitarists both challenge and are influenced by the “War on Women” through the examples of Code Pink, Women in Black, and the Peace and Justice League of Spokane’s domestic economic analyses and transnational solidarity efforts.

Conclusion/Continuation:

The conclusion closes the project by examining the implications of my research within the contemporary militarist, neoliberal, and activist landscape. I offer some suggestions for future directions of this research.
CHAPTER ONE

“There’s an App for That!”: The Commercialized Spectacle of Radical Politics and Reclaiming Retroactive Roots of Resistance

Figure 1.1: “The Protester.” *Time Magazine*, Shepard Fairey, December 2011. Web.

Fake Radical Public Sphere: Depoliticizing Activism through Commercialized Spectacle

In December 2011, *Time Magazine*’s annual “Person of the Year” took a different approach than the usual acknowledgement of individual success, as exemplified by the previous year’s cover, which donned Facebook’s creator Mark Zuckerberg. In 2011, following Arab Spring, European Summer, and the U.S. Occupy Wall Street events, *Time Magazine* dedicated its annual spot to “The Protester.” While this certainly brought the importance of activists’ labor to the forefront of media and political news culture, it also effectively depoliticized the actions and demands of protesters because it individualized them. Utilizing “The Protestor” as an example, I begin this chapter by drawing attention to how neoliberal commercialization—the commodification and marketing of objects/identities/resources for profit—excludes no aspect of culture and individual identity. Moreover, contemporary political subjectivities have become market values and sources for profit, and are regulated by the spectacles of “activism” that have become increasingly visible in popular and media culture, especially in late 90s images of antiglobalization work and the recent economic justice movements in the Arab Spring and Occupy Wall Street movements.

In this chapter, I argue that U.S. political processes that assert the individual citizen's power to access equal rights and freedom of choice shape the framework of contemporary activism. First, I highlight the history of feminist antimilitarist and queer activism and the integral role it plays in the methods of the Occupy Wall Street Movement. Yet the simultaneous

4 Image citations are available but have been removed for copyright purposes.
commodification of the current activism for consumer spectacle also impacts contemporary activist subjectivities. By analyzing historical actions in relation to OWS, I show how the mobilizing tactics of “occupation” and performance resist commercialization. Second, I examine the need for access to media that investigates the varying levels of geopolitics essential to mount meaningful resistance to militarism. In the United States, the media system is constructed in a way that “buries” political resistance, and makes this kind of investigation impossible. Ultimately, some activists internalize commercialized media spectacles. This process depoliticizes nonviolent direct actions and limits the impact activists have on public discourses.

Finally, I examine, through activist interviews, how feminist antimilitarists experience intergenerational struggle due to neoliberal disarticulation. I theorize the potential for change in technological applications that might allow activists to circulate their own political narratives and motivations.

*Time* Magazine’s annual “Person of the Year” edition is a reflection of contemporary neoliberal social and political ideologies. Political resistance and subjectivity are commodified as an embodied individual identity and relegated to spectacle for cultural consumption (Harold 192; Hind 1). The state’s political and economic ideologies are therefore relayed and recreated through media representations, and “the spectacle, taken in the limited sense of ‘mass media’ … [is] its most glaring superficial manifestation” (Debord 24). *Time*’s honoring of “the” political protester points to the social importance of resistance as it simultaneously depoliticizes the complexity of the multifaceted approach to activism and flattens the identity to an autonomous individual, a manifestation of the activist as spectacle.

Kurt Andersen’s article that accompanies “The Protestor” Person of the Year cover, speaks further to the spectacle of social protest and activism through a short history of liberal
citizenship. He argues that “Western liberalism” had become triumphant by 1991, which was followed by nearly two decades of complacency to capitalism (1). This analysis, which only briefly mentions the WTO Seattle protests of 1999 as “ineffectual and irrelevant,” denies any anti-globalization efforts and critiques by activists such as the Zapatista uprising of 1994, the South Korean worker’s strikes of 1996, and the global protests in 2003 of the invasion of Iraq and the U.S. led War of/on Terror (1). By framing his argument of the struggle for “true democracy” with respect to the U.S., Spain, Greece, Egypt, Libya, and Russia in the realm of “Western liberalism,” Andersen has privileged U.S. political processes that assert the individual citizen's power to access equal rights and freedom of choice (8). In the same ahistorical manner, Andersen argues, “[t]his year, do-it-yourself democratic politics became globalized, and real live protest went massively viral” through a mentality of “if you tweet it, they will come” (5-6).

Andersen’s depiction of activism is reduced to a creative application of social networking platforms. The “do-it-yourself” logic speaks to the privatization of risk and actions which neoliberal commercialization necessitates, relegating direct action as spectacle through social networking technology. Media emphasized the use of Twitter in the Egyptian uprising and the demonstrations in Portugal. Facebook also played a major role in the “Occupy” movements. These OWS actions have been termed part of the “Facebook Revolution.” Such media structures have been fetishized and the technological tools are given more significance than the mobilizing efforts of activists, who utilized these tools as a way to disperse their messages. While these tools proved useful, it also opened up a space for profit, the main intent of commercialization. A perfect example is the iPad “Occupy Wall Street” application, which provides activists with news updates and media coverage of the movement (Schechter). Direct action politics are
reduced and confined to technological spectacle, as the iPad slogan boasts “There’s an App for That.”

Andersen’s narrative and the image of “The Protestor” provide the media consumer with a relatable spectacle—a gender-neutral image of radical anarchism, displayed through the use of a bandana—the protestor becomes “the celebrity, the spectacular representation of a living human being, [who] embodies this banality by embodying the image of a possible role” (Debord 60). Neoliberal commercialization through the cultural spectacle and the fictitious creation of a public space for dissent, which *Time* promotes, drastically shift understanding of political subjectivities and erase historical and continued realities of struggle. I suggest that the public terrain creates intergenerational rifts in activists’ subjectivities because of commercialized media depictions’ depoliticization. Through an analysis that connects the radical histories of women’s peace camps and queer activism as spaces that have resisted such commercialized depictions, I further argue that retroactivism—retroactively examining activism of the past—provides a lens to understand the contemporary global economic justice movements in a way that circumvents depoliticized, aistorical spectacles. Finally, I explore how commercialization shapes contemporary feminist antimilitarist politics and intergenerational coalitions. These processes are important to understand in relation to activism because they highlight the alternatives that feminist voices offer.

An examination of the contemporary U.S. “Occupy Wall Street” (OWS) protests reveals activist methodologies that have long been central to radical activism: affinity groups, reclamation of public space, nonviolent civil disobedience, theater and performance, and decentralized organization, to name a few examples (Sturgeon, “Theorizing Movements;
These actions had been prominent in the feminist antimilitarist camps of the 1980s at the Greenham Common, Puget Sound Peace Camp, Women’s Pentagon Action, and the Seneca Falls Peace Camp and later in the 1987 efforts of the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP), which I will analyze in the second half of this chapter. These movements employed approaches that questioned military spending and the inequitable treatment of people based on gender, race, class, and sexuality. In the Post-Reagan Era, these movements’ politics saw the incorporation of their radical critiques into mainstream politics that depoliticized their actions and offered alternative identities that actually did not radically reshape economic and imperialist injustices. This is not to suggest that these actions weren’t incredibly important.

ACT UP’s efforts to make queer identities and the realities of living with HIV/AIDS an understanding in U.S. cultural and political life became a commodified visibility through niche marketing to people with AIDS, promoting a consumer identity. Sarah Schulman has referred to the increased visibility of gay and lesbian characters in television as the construction of a “fake, public homosexuality” (145). She argues that commodified public gay and lesbian identities were used to individualize, rather than politicize, sexual minorities and erase ACT UP radical material critiques of systemic policies of homophobia. The components of this fake, public homosexuality most visible in popular culture includes undermining discussions that mention homophobic politics in order to make straight people comfortable, and gay people are not

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5 It is not my intent in the analysis of Occupy Wall Street to center U.S. direct actions, which then became global, but rather to examine the coalitional efforts that occurred between students, peace, economic, environmental, antiglobalization, and anticapitalist activists making the radical roots of feminist antimilitarist camps and ACT UP ever more clear in previous actions. Occupy Wall Street began as an Adbusters Campaign on September 17, 2011 in Zuccotti Park, located on New York City’s Wall Street and then grew into solidarity demonstrations and global camps elsewhere. The OWS protests are against social and economic injustice and corporate/governmental greed, “The 99%” slogan directs attention to the increasing inequitable wealth distribution in the U.S. and abroad.
allowed to be heroes unless they do so by becoming martyrs, or are ultimately saved by straight people (Schulman 146-147). Taking these problematic depictions to task, Schulman states, “….marketing has done its job, diminishing the impact of a simple representation of homosexuality, and putting it to work for the heterosexual majority. The marketplace is filled with pumped-up distortions, while the real truths are always in flux and hard to depict” (151).

The stripping of radical work by ACT UP and the reduction of gay and lesbian identity to commercialized visibility, or a “fake, public homosexuality,” offer a critique that can be applied to the current constructions of radical political subjectivities within the public sphere, though they are not exclusively “homosexual” or necessarily sexual subjectivities as conventionally understood. These constructions become a spectacle, devoid of a political critique of power.

“The Protester” image offers the existence of political resistance, while making the figure benign or an image to be consumed. The fake public, Lucas Hilderbrand has argued, leaves activists retrospectively longing for a radical past, or retroactivisms, which in many ways depoliticizes their own contemporary labors and also divides analyses of intergenerational activism because it privileges the retrospective nostalgic constructions of a more politically active past (303). This public sphere simultaneously promotes the fetish of the new by suggesting radical activisms are ahistorically constructed, while paradoxically promoting a nostalgia for radical activisms. Nostalgic retrospection truncates the very “ability to map utopian possibilities” (Shahani 5). This phenomenon is displayed in Time’s analysis of “The Protester” by the suggestion that democratic politics are a spontaneous and recent occurrence. Further analyzing the roots of Occupy Wall Street in feminist antimilitarism and queer activism in relation to contemporary antimilitarists’ voices offers a lens for understanding “occupation.”
Thus, “occupying” commercialized public space is a source of critique against the political economy of neoliberalism and is also inextricably linked to militarism. 6

**Direct Theory and Performance as Spectacle: The Feminist Antimilitarist and ACT UP Roots of Occupy Wall Street**

Walter Benjamin’s historical materialist analysis in “On The Concept of History” argues that we must turn back in retrospection in order to understand the struggles and violence inflicted on others in the past as tied to our contemporary notions of “progress.” By applying Hilderbrand’s desire for retroactivism, or the cultivation of collective memory within social movements, to Benjamin’s concept of history, one can better recognize the role of radical struggle in our continued understandings of political resistance and progress towards social justice (309). The actions of ACT UP exist as a precursor for Hilderbrand’s revival of a visionary past in order to claim legitimacy in present actions. Explicitly connecting queer retroactivism and contemporary anti-war activism, Hilderbrand offers an analysis of consumer culture and its impacts on activism:

> At a time when shopping centers serve as our primary social spaces and activism has become increasingly virtual, Susan Leigh Foster argues for the importance of embodied activism. She expresses delight in seeing people come together for the anti-Iraq war rallies held simultaneously in cities worldwide in spring 2003. Indeed, I suspect that, for many of the millions who marched in the United for Peace and Justice rallies, few

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6 While I analyze feminist nuclear disarmament and ACT UP actions in the following section as analysis of “retroactivism,” it is necessary to state that the “Occupy Wall Street” activist methodologies are greatly indebted to the efforts of the French Situationists. This movement gained momentum in the 1960s and worked to occupy public space as a practice of Marxist philosophy and demanded labor rights through occupying factories for the good of gainfully employed citizens (Welsh).
believed that the protests would prompt Bush to change his course of action. Rather, I suspect the impulse to amass derived from desire to find solidarity. Like the classic gay rights slogan, it indeed seemed that ‘we [pacifists] are everywhere.’ Further, these mass actions of coming together gave hope and fuel to subsequent protests and mobilized efforts to prevent Bush’s reelection. Disappointment that we lost the 2004 presidential election despite massive progressive campaigning has certainly colored my retrospective view on such protests. (312)

Past actions play a role in activist formations and methods, albeit through a nostalgic retrospection, which may even recall a past that never existed. Across space and time solidarity becomes a mobilizing force for collective action. Anti-war activism and forms of collective solidarity become a movement when those involved refute institutionalized regulations, a main example of this being the reclamation of public space.

Activists’ critiques of the commercialized public space and hegemony as spectacle is not new, and it was the central contention of the 1968 student movements in Germany, France, Mexico, and the U.S.; however, the politics of spectacle have changed under neoliberal cultural formations. The reclamation of public spaces for the common became increasingly popular during the 1960s global student movements that demanded freedom of speech and educational access. While these movements were powerful, David Harvey warns, “[a]ny political movement that holds individual freedoms to be sacrosanct is vulnerable to incorporation into the neoliberal fold” (A Brief History 41).

Inclusion, not exclusion, defines commercialization, similar to what Schulman had termed “the fake public homosexuality.” As I have discussed, this inclusion or incorporation comes at the expense of radical transformation and therefore critical change in the public space.
The expense of inclusion in consumer culture forces consent to and reproduces the work of the state, war, and neoliberal capital. Hence, as Jacqui Alexander has argued, inclusion is how “spaces carry the potential for corruptibility” (5). The incorporation of marginalized peoples’ political mobilizations and subjugated knowledge within politics has come at the expense of radicalism for institutionalization. This is not to say that there is no hope for oppositional politics, but rather that mobilizations exist in a precarious space that both contends with and sometimes reproduces those politics of commercialized spectacle. This predicament has been embraced for mainstream acceptance, as I will discuss with ACT UP advertisement campaigns and in the feminist antimilitarist work of Code Pink and Women in Black.

Noël Sturgeon’s analysis of the “nonviolent direct action movement” use of “direct theory” offers an entry into analyzing how movements are seen as agents of knowledge and generators of their own theoretical paradigms (“Theorizing Moments” 36). For example, I draw attention here to the analyses of commercialized public space as falsely inclusive of identities. This is evident in the theory and subsequent actions put forward by queer, feminist antimilitarist, economic justice activists. For instance, the OWS movement’s critique of the commoditization of democracy, or democratic pursuits being literally bought and sold through corporate/government relationships, have long been the analyses of feminist, anti-racist, and queer scholars/activists. The slogan of the 2011 movement “We are the 99%” points to this reality, as it calls out the inequitable distribution of wealth, inevitably working through social locations of power and oppression (Andersen 2011). This analysis is central to organizing in economic and cultural neoliberalism, as material existence and politics are structured through sex, gender, race, class, and nationality; hence, identity politics and economics are inextricably linked through this inclusion (Duggan; Harvey, A Brief History of Neoliberalism; Miller). Feminist antimilitarists’
complex understanding and theorizations of militarism as a space that incorporates racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, nationalism, and environmental degradation is one way direct theory fuels action. Spectacle, when constructed solely for cultural consumption and commodification, depoliticizes nonviolent direct actions; however, sometimes the spectacle of performance and occupation of space through direct actions can dismantle the very existence of commercialization in favor of a public for the commons.

Looking to past forms of feminist antimilitarist activism offers a framework for understanding contemporary actions. After NATO’s 1979 decision to place U.S. missiles in European countries, twenty or more peace camps were set-up outside of military bases in Europe and the U.S. (Cook and Kirk 7). One of the most successful and longest lasting camps was the Greenham Common, which at its height in December 1982 attracted more than 30,000 women who linked arms to “Embrace the Base” (Cook and Kirk 64). The camp that began in 1981 had continued presence until 2000. The last missile was removed from the base in 1994, after years of dedication to creating a women’s occupied space in resistance to nuclear armament (Greenham Common Women’s Peace Camp Historic Site). The site now exists as New Greenham Park, a public space commemorating the peace and nonviolent actions of the Greenham Women’s Peace Camp.

Another nonviolent tactic that engaged the public in a performative manner occurred in June of 1982, when Greenham women of London staged their first large event. This was a die-in or a campaign for nuclear disarmament, and the group stated that, “[w]e’re going to institute a die-in. That’s a very simple thing to do—you just lie down and die, because that’s exactly what is going to happen if these missiles come here” (Cook and Kirk 40). Critiquing the patriarchal and masculinist roots of militarism and decision-making processes in the use of nuclear weapons,
the women created a woman only space. This strategy was necessary to create a space in which women’s voices and direct theories would be central and be heard. We find very similar strategies in the contemporary peace and anti-war activism of Code Pink and Women in Black.

Actions analogous to the Greenham Peace Camp occurred in the U.S., such as the November 17th, 1980 Women’s Pentagon Action in which women demanded nuclear disarmament by “weaving the web of life” with brightly colored yarn (Feinman 21). Two thousand women led by large puppets created a symbolic cemetery and demanded that as women their mourning not be private, but rather a public matter, stating: “We have come here to mourn and rage and defy the Pentagon because it is the workplace of imperial power which threatens us all” (Women’s Pentagon Action Unity Statement). Utilizing the yarn and gravestones as symbols to mobilize the women in nonviolent action serves the dual purpose of political performance as making injustice visible and creating community (Singhal and Greiner 50).

Two important peace camps in the United States that utilized the same model as the Greenham Peace Camp and was comprised of affinity groups and women from the Pentagon Action were the Puget Sound Women’s Peace Camp and Seneca Women’s Peace Encampment. The Puget Sound Women’s Peace Camp opened in June of 1983 in opposition to missile production and technology through the Boeing Cruise Missile Plant and its deployment site of the Greenham Common (“Participants” 17). The peace camps are representative of feminist transnational actions thorough nonviolent tactics against the national militarism that was condoned through international political allies, namely the U.S. and the U.K. Similar camps also existed in Italy and the Netherlands (Krasniewicz 37). The focus on Boeing also brought attention to the profit-driven motivation of militarism. Rather than demonstrating against industry, the peace camp offered a long-term and sustainable way to foster communication
between activists and Boeing workers about how nuclear weapons impact all people (Participants 16). This approach to encampment offered a capitalist critique but also engaged the understanding of labor and job security as a feminist concern in a militarized world. Rather than oppose laborers working for Boeing, this nonviolent approach offered a way to create allied understandings of one another’s connections to the base.

The opening of the Puget Sound Camp coincided with the opening of the Seneca Women’s Peace Encampment. The Seneca Army Depot, like the Boeing Cruise Missile Plant, was selected because activists wanted to promote a conversion of the depot from military production to factories to ensure meaningful labor. The place also held symbolic importance, as Seneca had a long history of women’s activism from the Iroquois Confederacy (16th century to the present), to Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad (1850-1865), and the Seneca Falls Convention (1848). This history was used to bolster the connections between feminism and anti-nuclear activism (Krasniewicz 41).

Similar to the Women’s Pentagon Action, the activists at Puget Sound utilized the powerful symbol of webs by performing with yarn and linking one another in actions surrounding the depot. This symbolism critiqued patriarchal culture, knowledge, and decision-making processes. The web was non-linear and showed the interconnectedness of human life and the environment. This decentralized model of power could empower individual activists and affinity groups, rather than reproduce the controlling decision-making mechanisms of government from which the women felt disenfranchised (Starhawk 53).

The roots of feminist antimilitarism in addressing commercialized spaces through opposition to militarized bases show the importance of connecting struggles across goals and social identities. Using Marxist philosophy to address labor exploitation and underemployment,
their actions demonstrated how militarism inflates jobs through the construction of unstable temporary labor; hence, the women sought bases that they could convert into useful spaces of labor. Later, in the 1990s, the base was restructured for non-military purposes. Militarism and anti-nuclear activism have illustrated how reappropriation of public space and its transformation into a common space is a central mode to resisting the capitalist and militarist coupling in the military-industrial-complex. Performance actions also played a role in constructing a non-threatening message to larger audiences of the camps and demonstrations. Both of these methods refuted the institutionalized roles and boundaries of culturally accepted public/private space distinctions, especially by making the public space one’s home, as shown in the peace encampments that women occupied.

Performative direct actions, while a mobilization for communities, can also be seen as a spectacle allowing citizens, who are the audience, to engage in the space in an alternative manner. This can work to defuse public opposition in a playful way and foster public engagement rather than outright resistance. ACT UP utilized the strategy of making commercial spectacle by using existing advertisements activists transformed public spaces into a space for action, public discourse, and awareness. An example of this is Gran Fury’s public poster campaign in New York City subway terminals, including the renowned “Silence=Death” poster, which demanded bystanders' political recognition and reflexivity. Spectacle also went beyond poster to actions in an attempt to make all places safe for the citizens who occupied them. The first ACT UP civil disobedience was notably another “Die In” staged on Wall Street in March of 1987 in order to protest the prohibitive costs of AZT, an anti-AIDS drug (Eigo 180). The following year, the group organized more than one thousand people, many members of affinity groups to impede the traffic on Wall Street. And, in 1989 they launched an attack on the
commercialized news source the *New York Times* by replacing the newspaper in vending machines with “New York Crimes.” Other direct actions included occupying NY Senator Bruno’s office to demand access to AIDS drugs (Eigo 180). This action advocated health access as a public right, rather than backroom political discussion.

Important aspects of the feminist antimilitarist and ACT UP direct actions that I have laid out included decentralized organization with consensus based decision-making processes and affinity groups. Affinity groups are small groups that work in coalition with other groups to comprise an entire movement. Their actions are generally coordinated to support a main goal or political message (Starhawk 53-55). Affinity groups in these cases staged die-ins, paper jams, and often used street theater as a means of performance to project a politicized message to a wide audience. These examples of the use of affinity groups, theater as nonviolent disobedience, and reclamation of spaces point to a method that is performative in order to “reclaim” or “liberate” public spaces for the collective citizenry.

Women’s ACT UP affinity groups also entered heterosexual male-dominated public spaces to address the realities of women’s sexual and health experiences. During the 1988 Nine-Days of action, as activist Maxine Wolfe accounts in her recollection of the protests, the women decided to attend a Mets game and purchased block seating in three portions of Shea Stadium. Leafleting and holding banners stating, “Strike out AIDS” and “No glove, no love,” allowed them to reach 20,000 people attending the Mets game, and the actions were televised by major sports channels (Wolfe qtd. in Ingram, Anne-Marie Bouthillette, and Yolanda Retter). Creating a performance spectacle in a culturally masculine space allowed the activists to acquire new and diverse audiences; hence, combining performance and entertainment allowed these activists to prompt civil engagement. These examples of ACT UP actions show the practice of
intersectional “direct theory” through the praxis of demanding health care, queer, gender, and economic justice.

“Occupation”: Contemporary Methodologies

Moving to the present “occupation” of public space, I contend that many of these same methodologies are being repurposed. The direct actions of contemporary activism and the OWS exist in a very different socio-political climate than such large events as the Women’s Pentagon Action, ACT UP’s die-in on Wall Street, and even the later WTO protests of Seattle in 1999. Post 9/11 in the U.S. has proven to be a time of increased policing and racial profiling, increased regulation around public protest, and the militarization of public places and the public sphere writ large. The messages of movements post-9/11 have become more global and have responded to U.S. imperial and capitalist power. As Benjamin Shepard argued in the wake of the WTO protests, “new movements became all the more urgent: the need to globalize democracy, not corporate rule,” was central, and it is an emphasis of the current struggle for economic justice (16). February 15, 2003 was a global day of action against the planned U.S. and ally invasion of Iraq, and included critiques of the military-industrial complex (Verhulst 1-3). These connections manifested in slogans like, “No Blood for Oil” and “Not in Our Name” (Verhulst 1). The previous activisms discussed in this chapter point to economic corruption in AIDS research, health care policies, and militarism, similar to the multi-faceted demands of OWS.7

7 In a post 9/11 U.S. space is increasingly policed and privatized, and actions that occupy space without institutional permission have become controversial in new ways. In March 2012 President Obama signed into law H.R. 347 the “Federal Restricted Buildings and Grounds Improvement Act of 2011.” This law makes protest a federal offense with a sentence of a year to 10 years in federal prison, if it occurs during a National Special Security Event or where special security forces are present. The response by labor union activists and Occupy groups has been a strategically planned spring 2012 spring training in civil disobedience and direct action of the
Some of the ways in which the politics of feminist antimilitarist camps and ACT UP have been foundational in the OWS movement are through the acquisition of space and appropriation of commercialized spaces. Both of these historical forms of activism have worked in coalition and added to the complex analysis of OWS. The radical roots of ACT UP and peace encampments provided valuable methodological tools, such as the reclamation of space and the use of performance for contemporary movements to address the commercialization of the commons.

An ACT UP press release calls for co-demonstration with OWS on April 25, 2012 to demand a Financial Speculation Tax:

[ACT UP and OWS] are calling on local, state, and federal legislators to “give Wall Street the FiST,” which is needed to fill AIDS funding gaps and—once and for all—provide universal healthcare in the US. It’s time for effective healthcare to be made available to everyone—to the 99%, not just the 1%. (ACT UP/NY)

The acronym “FiST” brings queer identity and performative playfulness as spectacle to the front of the critique. This similar wit and camp-like performance is utilized in the feminist theater of Code Pink and Radical Cheerleaders.

“Elder Day” in November 2011 at Zuccotti Park, brought the testimonies of successful peace encampments. One woman from Greenham Common who is currently with WiB, shared her experiences with women’s struggles against nuclear weapons manufacturing, stating where a plant once was, “now there are cows grazing” (Ditosti). Examining the retroactivism in the roots of OWS clearly points to a continued intergenerational dialectic between feminist nuclear disarmament activists and the critiques of capitalism that are central to the OWS demands.

“99%” (Tapley).
The utility of spectacle, especially as performance, emerges in the interviews I conducted between 2008-2011 as an important method in their activism. Women in Black have used this tactic since their inception in Jerusalem in 1988, which was also influenced by the earlier Greenham Common encampment. Krista, a member of the Peace and Justice League of Spokane, Women in Black (WiB) of Spokane, and a radical cheerleader, argued that women’s unified presence is increasingly important in the rapidly commodified public spaces of neoliberalism:

*Mary Jo*: Why do you think performance is so important to your activism?

Krista: First of all it is fun; if I'm not enjoying it I'm not a very good activist, so I have to enjoy it. It has to be something a little different, generally I don't want to walk in a march anymore, even though we just did that [in Slut Walk] but generally I'm looking for something that engages me in a different manner. But also because I think it is very easy to ignore me if I'm giving you a pamphlet or yelling into a bullhorn using statistics about war. It is very difficult to walk past seven women in mourning gear outside of a mall. It is very hard not to approach them and say, “What are you doing?”

*Mary Jo*: Do you think it is powerful to see a group of women occupying a public space like that?

Krista: Totally…what we are doing is demanding the space back. I don't care that this is your place of commerce, I don't care that this is not what people do. This is a real way of saying people have a right to speak and to challenge norms in discourses.

*Mary Jo*: Do you think politics have been pushed into a private space?

Krista: I think politics have been pushed into a commercial space.

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8 See Introduction and Appendices A, B, C for reference to activist interviews and methodology.
Mary Jo: Can you explain that?

Krista: Well there is the obvious level of politics literally being bought and sold at this point. Elections are, politicians are, and the way in which we are allowed to educate people are. Because the means in which we are allowed to educate people and the means in order to get that information to people is so often capitalized. Even the Internet is commercialized in that you have to have a certain amount of economic privilege and knowledge to access it.

The strategy Krista describes has similarly been applied to OWS, which demands access to public space as a means to address the corporatization of politics, economics and democracy. The Women in Black of Union Square in New York City have connected their message of resistance to U.S. and Israeli invasion of Palestine to the OWS movement. Since October 2011, their message has been “Occupy Wall Street, Not Palestine” (www.womeninblackunionsq.org). This message incorporates both a critique of the militarist occupation of Palestine, and draws a direct connection to the neoliberal politics of the United States that condone the relationship of war violence and profit.

The media coverage and depictions of OWS have also pointed to a need for the critique of commercialization. Mass protest is not an end in and of itself. Instead, as expressed by a WiB activist, it is meant to send a strong message to global and local audiences and have an impact on those politicians and decision makers and exist as a symbol of political discontent by disenfranchised voices. Kara of Eau Claire, WI WiB stated, “I thought it was very powerful being just women, women haven't had a chance to present a viable alternative globally for better structures of government and commerce and so forth. Their voices have not been heard. All that goes around in my head with Women in Black. I thought it being just women was very
powerful.” Expanding upon this goal, it is necessary to attract media, more specifically accurate media coverage of movements and the reality of U.S. foreign policy on geopolitical power (Walgrave 248-249). As Kara stated about the relation of media coverage to politics:

I think women are just less connected to the rest of the world here, I'm sorry to say. Maybe it is just small town Wisconsin, but it takes work to be connected to the rest of the world and the concerns of the world. If you are not in academe, as an academic librarian on a college campus it was easy. I don't think it is easy for most women or citizens. The media militates against it, the commercial culture, the media. You have to work to get real news, you have to subscribe to a newspaper out of the area, it is economically prohibitive.

While Kara is mainly discussing access to progressive and non-U.S. centric media sources for activists, the representations of activist subjectivities and proliferated messages also impact the functions of movements. As Ava—the founder of Students in Black, which utilized the important activist method of Women in Black to stand in resistance to war on the University of Wisconsin campus—articulated, the ability to show dissent by standing silently on campus allowed her to connect local politics to issues and people in other global settings. She stated that, “this organization made us aware of this [local issues], but in some ways it connected me to the people we stood for.” She continued that they stood in protest to raise awareness because people weren’t aware about the impacts of war in Wisconsin, saying, “I guess because of corporate or mainstream media, [issues] people didn't know about.” The political limitations and issues of commercialized media sources are illustrated in activists’ references to mainstream media as obscuring the impact of war, as well as the impact it has on recruitment for activist causes.

The commercialized spectacle reproduced around the actions of Occupy Wall Street, as
shown in the *Time* Magazine 2011 Person of the Year edition, flatten the complexity of the existing historical roots of reclaiming public space. However, the relationship between social movements and media is intricately tied to representation and proliferation of such messages. As the activists involved in feminist antimilitarist networks articulated, access to media that investigates varying levels of geopolitics is essential to contest militarism. It is also necessary to create an understanding of social movements.

The movement against the impending war in Iraq was international in scope and far surpassed the opposition to the war in Vietnam (Epstein). One reason for this was because of the broad scope of activism, including, for instance antiglobalization groups, environmental groups and people on the left. Despite this, media coverage often deters citizens from fully understanding and acknowledging dissent to militarism. Downplaying the international anti-war movement greatly hampered recognition of the critical mass of citizens opposed to U.S. imperialism. Similarly, the 1999 “Battle for Seattle” and OWS, both largely coalitional and non-hierarchical movements, have been criticized and depicted by U.S. mainstream news coverage as “outcasts” and “disorganized.” These messages play a role in what Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky have termed “flak” in their theorized propaganda model. “Flak” is the process of discrediting organizations, politicians, or dissent to state policies, and importantly it is also the refusal of legitimacy in media representations. “Flak” is not new, but rather it has increasingly proliferated through the omnipresent media culture. A similar depiction of anti-war activism occurred during the Vietnam War protests. As scholar of the Vietnam war protests Todd Gitlin argues in *The Whole World Is Watching*, “[Y]esterday’s ignored or ridiculed kook becomes today’s respected ‘consumer activist,’ while at the same time the mediated image of the wild sixties yields to the image of the laid-back, apathetic, self-satisfied seventies” (4). Schulman
observations about the commodification of growing queer liberation in the 1980s are similar to Todd Gitlin’s analysis of the 1960s. Commodification of political activism through incorporation in the consumer culture is also experienced in contemporary feminist politics, and has been adopted in political and media culture.

The ubiquitous importance of media culture has also been central to how movements function in public spaces. As I began this chapter, I pointed to the complex role media representations and technological communications play in shaping contemporary radical politics. Representations of social movements’ campaigns and framing of political intent are vital to their success. Activists must constantly be vigilant of media representations, but they also have been interpellated by the importance of media communication. Understanding this complexly bound relationship of representation and interpellation is necessary to examine the impacts on feminist antimilitarists’ subjectivities.

Commodification of Politics and the Impacts on Feminist Antimilitarist Strategies

The cover of Time Magazine in June 1998 is not dissimilar from that of December 2011, where I began my analysis. It brings politics to the forefront by asking “Is Feminism Dead?” The question is juxtaposed by an imagery of the linear trajectory of white, straight, middle class feminism: Susan B. Anthony, Betty Friedan, Gloria Steinem, and Ally McBeal. As a fictional television character created by FOX, McBeal is positioned as the “death of feminism” or a postfeminist representational marker of popular culture’s utilization of feminist rhetoric and narratives to purportedly empower white, female characters. Feminist theorist Mary Hawkesworth has argued that the emphasis on the death of feminist activism fits well within a neoliberal political economy, because it desensitizes us to the materially important and necessary
critiques of the sexist division of capitalist labor. It forces feminism from the public sphere to
the re-gendered private sphere. She states:

Burial is the ultimate privatization for feminist political strategies intended to publicize
hitherto private experiences of domesticity, intimacy, sexuality, consciousness.
Feminism’s live burial then coincides nicely with neoliberalism’s curtailment of the
political agenda, constricting public spaces, restoring the veil of privacy. In limiting
feminists’ sphere of action as well as public understanding of the politically actionable,
neoliberalism’s live immurement of feminism re-genders feminists as well as feminist
projects, returning feminists to a coerced inertia while reasserting the sanctity of private
relations beyond public scrutiny or political action. (Hawkesworth 173)

Feminist antimilitarism is uniquely positioned within the “live burial” narrative surrounding
feminism because the very intersection of antimilitarism and feminism exists within the
rhetorical hijacking of feminism for the Bush Administration’s U.S. invasion of Afghanistan,
specifically its logic of “protecting women” through war.

The “postness” of political activism that Hawkesworth connects to neoliberal
constructions of feminism exists in multiple activist terrains. The anti-war movement has also
been effectively mourned and claimed “dead.” In July 2011 Todd Gitlin argued that this was
largely due to media’s lack of attention to anti-war demonstrators, but he also criticizes activist
labor stating, “demonstrators are unlikely to invest their energies in what look from the start like
very lost causes.” Code Pink founder, Medea Benjamin, who termed Gitlin’s argument an
“obituary for an antiwar movement,” took his comments to task. She argues that large-scale
anti-war movements have refashioned themselves to address different roots of militarism. She
specifically cites the work being done with Code Pink’s “Bring Our Billions Home” campaign, which addresses the U.S. military budget's impacts on social welfare and community resources.

The published discussion between these activists indicates the tension in the perception of the contemporary “burial” of political resistance. Occupy Wall Street, like feminist and anti-war movements, has also been declared “over.” Much of this can be attributed to political repression and policies forcing protestors out of the public spaces they demanded access to through occupation. But it also points to the larger issue of diffusing activists and separating coalition efforts. Stuart Hall theorizes the political commercialization of movements and the resultant conflicts in movements as disarticulation. Angela McRobbie, feminist scholar of postfeminist politics and culture, has taken up this concept to examine how disarticulation has “undone feminism” by denigrating solidarity work across difference. Specifically it undermines potential intergenerational solidarities between women, as feminism is portrayed as a “pastness,” “dead,” or in many cases in the backlash sense, as “man-hating” (McRobbie 9). To look at Stuart Hall’s disarticulation in reverse, McRobbie offers an analysis of how this can be read as divisive to important coalition efforts between postcolonial, anti-racist, and inter-generational feminist scholars and activists. Postfeminist discourse and representation “celebrate[s] the fashion-conscious ‘thong-wearing’ Western girls” which according to McRobbie reinforces notions of colonial feminism in Western superiority and creates a consumer driven image of feminism, a topic further examined in Chapter Three (27). Reading activist statements through a framework of disarticulation offers a way to make sense of how activists’ subjectivities are impacted by the commercialization of their politics.
Disrupting a Wave: Intergenerational Politics and Feminist Antimilitarism

The following examples cover a theme of intergenerational strife revolving around consumer culture that I found in multiple activists’ sentiments during my interviews. In May 2009, I interviewed and participated with Union Square and New York Public Library Women in Black. A commonality echoed in both groups during my participation was the concern that younger women were not involved in their actions. Most women in the group were retired or nearing the age of retirement and were concerned about how their momentum would continue in their absence. Maria of New York Public Library WiB stated, “[laughing] I am one of the youngest women involved, what will happen as we continue to get older?” While participating in both groups, I noticed that several women in each group made remarks about me being young and asked where other women my age were.

This sentiment about young feminists and activists not being concerned with antimilitarist politics was also echoed by women involved in Boulder, CO Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) and the Rocky Mountain Peace and Justice Center. As Maureen of Rocky Mountain Peace and Justice Center stated in our conversation:

Maureen: We need more young people involved, because shockingly I'm one of the younger ones...why aren't there people in their 20s and 30s, granted when Vietnam was going on, the draft was occurring so there was a strong impetus to get out of the war. It is different because there is not that strong tie to the teens and 20 year olds now, to the draft.

Mary Jo: I think that military still has a class draft, but there seems to be apathy around privilege. Why don't you think young people are involved?
Maureen: Well I have been told by 20 year olds that the peace movement is too broad, they want a plan and then it is done. Like an instant gratification.

Clearly the absence of a draft removes young people as a social group from the material reality and implications of sharing the experiences of forced military service across race and class. But beyond this is also the existence of contemporary coalitions and new activist networks, for instance feminist media activism and the growing food justice movement. Occupy Wall Street offers one such place that a complex coalitional work can address imperialism from an environmental, antiglobalization, feminist, and queer analysis. Maureen’s use of “instant gratification” problematically utilizes a consumer-based language to suggest that young activists have been colonized by capitalism. Her language speaks to the cultural formation of neoliberalism that increasingly places individuals’ political power as solely tied to consumer “choice” and agency (McRobbie; Miller). In this case, Maureen utilizes “instant gratification” as a criticism of younger activists as desiring the effect of antimilitarism as quickly completed as their next purchase.

Anne Marie of Boulder Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom furthered this sentiment by analyzing the impacts of American consumer culture as tied to apathy towards peace building:

Most people have to work, it isn’t a choice. There isn't a family wage any longer, maybe it is family greed. People have to have their iPhone and iPad, laptops and modern flat screen T.V.s, or multiple T.V.s and multiple stuff. Busy lives that don't include work for peace. Faith groups could become a big space for peace activism.
Both of these sentiments presume that people in their 20s and 30s are not involved in contemporary antiwar and peace actions and further emphasize a shrinking public interest in peace and antimilitarist activism.

The assumption that young women are not engaged in feminist antimilitarism is directly connected to the neoliberal commercialization of the political subjectivities in both feminism and anti-war movements. While that commercialization has obscured the identities and struggles of social movements, it has also made them more visible and readily available to critique and engagement. Retroactivism offers a re-envisioning of social movements as solely linear and a theory of intergenerational meshings as a move towards socially just and sustainable futures.

Understanding the queer and feminist antimilitarist roots in the OWS movement illustrates an alternative to dominant narratives in media culture that proclaim “The Protester” to be a new and fashionable spectacle. Retroactivism presents a material framework for understanding the commodification of past activisms to contemporary ones. More importantly it disrupts accepted notions of intergenerational strife between “First” and “Second” wave feminists. Rather, complicating the burial of radical politics and backlashes to feminism and the transformation to individual consumer choices in political rhetoric has shaped the portrayal of contemporary feminism as a mere “lifestyle or commodity” as told by neoliberal media culture. Feminist theorist Ednie Garrison has problematized the feminist wave metaphor and argues for a shift from the unproductive divisions of the evolutionary feminist “oceanographic waves” towards an understanding of feminist “radio waves”:

Like ocean waves, radio waves are a fairly naturally occurring movement involving oscillation, undulation, fluttering, signaling … Unlike ocean waves, however, radio
waves are a naturally occurring force that enables technologically developed forms of communication—transmission and reception. (288)

Retroactivism, as analyzed through feminist and queer actions manifested in the Occupy Wall Street movement, offers a site of “radio waves” for young feminists to counter accusations that their generation is preoccupied with consumer culture.

The iPad consumer tagline “There’s An App For That” places radical politics in a dangerous intersection with the commodification of activism as a public spectacle to be consumed. The technology, however, provides a new tool for resistance. Chela Sandoval’s critique of racism and classism in Second Wave feminism demands that marginalized “differential consciousness” not be wed to one typology of theory/action, but rather that we use multi-faceted approaches to social change. Constant vigilance and hesitation is necessary to examine feminist complacencies in the political project to “bury feminism”; but perhaps, we must also consider how these imposed tools might play integral roles to contemporary feminist antimilitarists. As Catherine Lumby has argued:

If feminism is to remain engaged with and relevant to the everyday lives of women, then feminists desperately need the tools to understand everyday culture. We need to engage with the debates in popular culture rather than taking an elitist and dismissive attitude toward the prime medium of communication today. (Lumby qtd in Karlyn 8-9)

Mary, an activist who was a part of the 2009 “Gaza Freedom March” in Cairo with Code Pink and a member of the Palouse Peace Coalition (ID and WA), echoed this clearly in her own use of Facebook. When asked: “Do you think Facebook gives you a voice?” she stated:

I do, I do. Ok, some of my friends get it who didn't ask for it, but it does sort of spread the word...it is fascinating to see things shared and then see it explode, too. And like the
Rachel Corey thing on her birthday and the anniversary of her death everyone changed their picture to her image you can see there is this whole connection of other people. There is that connection and there are a lot of journalists on Facebook that are a part of this whole community. They are publishing and you are getting it first hand too, it makes connections easier.

Understanding how technological media applications might allow activists to circulate their own political narratives and motivations certainly is essential to the changing formations of the public sphere and the relationship to activists’ subjectivities. However, these sites must not be mistaken for democratic access of public spaces. Rather, as feminist antimilitarist and anticapitalist articulations in OWS have shown, we must strategically “Occupy” them as a means of resistance.
CHAPTER TWO

From “Mother Angelina,” “Mamma Grizzlies,” to Motherhood Methodologies: Feminist Antimilitarism in the Culture of Motherhood Marketization

Contemporary celebrity and political culture have increasingly employed repronormative narratives about motherhood and its centralized role in neoliberal definitions of femininity. From Vice Presidential candidate Sarah Palin’s May 2010 call to conservative women to become “Mamma Grizzlies” and “take back the country” (Sarah PAC advertisement, 2010) to media coverage of Angelina Jolie’s and Madonna’s transnational and transracial adoptions, motherhood has played a role in shaping public discourse and views of femininity. At the core of these forms of celebrity motherhood are the assumed gender normative behaviors of a white, heterosexual nuclear family and how these families become static representations of the U.S. national context.

In July 2011, Michelle Bachmann, a Palin-identified “Mamma Grizzly,” and other Republican leaders signed onto The Marriage Vow. The Marriage Vow, advocated by Iowa-based conservative group The Family Leader, called upon racist nostalgia to argue that African-American families were more healthy during slavery than contemporary times, utilized homophobic bigotry to argue for monogamous heterosexual marriage as both the “natural” and social order, and called for nativist white-centric reproduction, stating the need for “robust childbearing and reproduction [for the benefit of] U.S. demographic, economic, strategic and actuarial health and security” (The Family Leader 2). This pledge politicizes conservative ideologies about the classed, raced, and sexed underpinnings of family in nation building.

Maternal images and motherhood are a contested terrain within U.S. media, political, and consumer culture. Contemplating this context in relation to an impressive history of peace activism and scholarship that strategically uses motherhood as an organizing principle against war, I argue in this chapter that the current economic and political terrain is increasingly
saturated with marketized motherhood, making the alliance of feminist antimilitarism to motherhood increasingly problematic. Examining motherhood-based peace activism in relation to popular maternal imagery, I will point to the impacts of imperial feminist history, repronormative capitalism, and fetal “personhood” as points of contention for future feminist antimilitarist actions rooted in mothering identities.

Mapping the Scholarship and Activism of “Motherhood Methodologies”

The tendency to mobilize maternal identity within women’s anti-war stances is not new. Micaela Di Leonardo’s 1985 essay “Morals, Mothers, and Militarism: Antimilitarism and Feminist Theory” first described the dubious relationship that motherhood discourse has to anti-war activism, asserting that utilizing modernist character constructions of women as “nurturing,” and therefore peaceful, is a continuation of biological determinism that renders militarism and processes of the nation-state obscure and outside of the gendered construction of ‘women.’ She reminds us that the Moral Mother — which she defines as “nurturant, compassionate …instinctive spokeswoman for all that is vulnerable” — privileges heterosexual reproduction, thereby reinforcing heteronormativity (Di Leonardo 602). This point begins my analysis of how contemporary maternal constructions — popularized in celebrity and political motherhood—bind women to existing marketization of motherhood and simultaneously further marginalize non-normative gendered and sexual citizens.

In the neoliberal era of privatization, economic insecurity, and declining social services, the backlash against women, moralism and personal responsibility have served to reshape gendered identities. Susan Douglas and Meredith Michaels theorization of the “new momism” examines the increasing role of self-disciplined motherhood discourses that are used to regulate
gender and foster a sense of nostalgia for past heterosexual domesticity under the guise of women’s “choice.” The amplification of media coverage surrounding mothers has occurred over the past three decades, specifically in relation to the “national threat” of Reagan’s fictitiously constructed “welfare queens” (Douglas and Michaels 20). The “new momism” provides women with an unattainable image of perfected motherhood through proper consumer choices and is marketed as a sign of “women’s progress.” They argue:

Central to the new momism, in fact, is the feminist insistence that woman have choices, that they are active agents in control of their own destiny, that they have autonomy. But here’s where the distortion of feminism occurs. The only truly enlightened choice to make as a woman, the one that proves, first, that you are a ‘real’ woman, and second, that you are a decent, worthy one, is to become a ‘mom’ and to bring to child rearing a combination of selflessness and professionalism that would involve the cross cloning of Mother Teresa with Donna Shalala. Thus the new momism is deeply contradictory: It both draws from and repudiates feminism. (Douglas and Michaels 5)

Increased visibility of reality T.V. surrounding mothers, for instance MTV’s Teen Mom, tabloid celebrity “baby bump” sightings, the creation of a mother niche market in consumer advertisements, and the resurgence of feminist-based mothering and midwifery practices, speaks to the marketed identity underpinning the “new momism.” By examining the historical and contemporary activist roles around mothers and feminist antimilitarism as a conventional knowledge, I view this chapter as a participation in the discussion of what Douglas and Michaels have termed the “new momism,” a marketed image of exceptional womanhood bound to self-sacrificing motherhood, which is reminiscent of Leonardo’s critique of the “Moral Mother.”
The maternal/mother identity as a means of alliance for anti-war mobilization, or what I refer to as “motherhood methodologies,” has historically been used by women who have been relegated to the private sphere in order to access political participation in the public sphere to voice dissent to the culture of militarism. I have chosen to define this form of activism as a methodology because it is a historical practice used to both bolster and struggle against militarist and nationalist violences and is connected to the tenets of what Sara Ruddick refers to as “women’s politics of resistance” (225). While I lay out here the difference between motherhood ideology and maternal discourse, I have chosen to refer to activism done on the basis of ‘mother’ as an identity as motherhood because part of these actions are defining women’s relations to children and maternal work as oppositional to nationalist militarism, or in some cases as shown, connected to the work of the nation-state. Motherhood therefore is a culturally specific form of feminine identity, as well as a time period naturalized as integral to a woman’s life, even though in many cases, the activists cited remain cognizant of it as a socially constructed and exploited category.

Leonardo referred to this public action as the “moral mother discourse” in her 1985 essay; however, the most theoretical work on maternal/mother identity in relation to feminist peace action has been Sara Ruddick’s 1989 work *Maternal Thinking*. Mothering, Ruddick argues, is a gendered labor, yet anyone who cares for the “preservation, growth, and social acceptability” of children has the capacity to be maternal (17). Ruddick is careful to make a distinction between maternal thinking and motherhood as an ideological apparatus to exploit women’s labor and biologically essentialize females as feminine nurturing beings, most notably present in the “cult of womanhood” present in 19th century constructions of bourgeois femininity. While she is critical of this logic, her theorization of “maternal thinking” insists that feminist
scholars must recognize the material importance of maternal labor. Instead of assigning attributes to an innate female identity, maternal discourses recognize gendered social constructions. *Maternal Thinking* directly relates to militarism, as Ruddick lays out the ways in which maternal epistemology, which is self-consciously constructivist, is diametrically opposed to socialized militarism and violence that threatens peace. In order to critique the essentialist notion that men are militarists and women are peaceful, Ruddick argues that both men and women have the capacity to be violent and uphold nationalist agendas, but militarist tools of misogyny and enticing myths of patriotic duty socialize boys and men into soldiers (152).

Turning towards the political utility of maternal thinking, Ruddick asserts that those who mother as a critical act of militarist opposition have disproportionately scant access to the resources necessary to fight governments or militaries, but they have nonviolent tools, the very tools often used to teach and care for children. Nonviolent mothering can offer an “invigorating image of peace as an active connectedness” (183). Ruddick’s definition of “[a] woman’s politics of resistance,” includes the use of cultural imagery/symbolism of femininity, women unified in solidarity, and resisting practices or policies of their government (222). Ruddick, however, is careful not to romanticize women’s resistance as solely nonviolent. Women as cultural symbols are also necessary for nationalist government’s reflections of war.

As demonstrated above, there is a history of feminist activism and scholarship examining women’s nonviolent protest to governmental militarism. Some historic uses of the motherhood methodology include Julia Ward Howe’s “Mother’s Day Proclamation” of 1870—the “true” origins of Mother’s Day—in which she urged U.S. mothers to bind across difference to oppose the civil war, because she argued it allowed “our sons to be trained to injure theirs” (Howe 83). Similarly, U.S. Quaker women used this sentiment in early arguments for women’s suffrage and
the abolition of slavery. Another important utilization of the motherhood methodology includes the 1961-1980 U.S. “Women Strike for Peace” Movement in Washington D.C., which used motherhood as a feminist standpoint, and in which predominantly white, middle-class women argued that they had forgone careers to produce and raise the next generation, a language problematically tied to nation building (Swerdlow 1-6).

During the 1980’s nuclear era, the participation of women in the antiwar movement often utilized motherhood rhetoric. The “Mothers and Others Action” originating in Santa Cruz, CA, actively opposed the Reagan-imposed imagery of the “militarized white mother” by critiquing essentialist ideological assumptions that mothering is inherently a feminine identity and opening the definition to include “mothering” in a variety of identities (Sturgeon, Ecofeminist Natures 73). While this action built from the importance of mother movements, it actively addressed Di Leonardo’s concerns of the “Moral Mother.”

The use of mothering images and models have also existed in other national contexts, as in the struggle of Mothers and Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo who opposed the military dictatorship in Argentina from 1976-1983. Raging Grannies, originating in Victoria, Canada in 1987 and now existing in the U.S., Europe, and Canada, began as an anti-nuclear movement that radicalizes popular songs and “rage for peace, social and political justice, and environmental preservation… and to create a better world for our children and grandchildren” (Rohrer 226). In the late 1990s, women affiliated with Four Mothers protest, a group of Israeli women and mothers who had raised sons that were involved in the Israeli infantry, stood in Lebanon to protest Israel’s war in southern Lebanon. It has also appeared in Turkey in 1995, where Turkish mothers opposed the militarized government and disappearances of activists held under police custody.
A recent use of activist motherhood methodology in the U.S. has been anti-war mother Cindy Sheehan’s contribution to questioning U.S. imperialism. She has been deeply active in Code Pink where she also participated in their 2006 Mother's Day celebration about the necessity of mothers in the anti-war movement. Code Pink began in the United States in 2002 in opposition to the Bush administrations plans to invade Iraq. Code Pink plays off of cultural representations of femininity in relation to the red/orange security threat statuses in the United States. As they state:

Women have been the guardians of life — not because we are better or purer or more innately nurturing than men, but because the men have busied themselves making war. Because of our responsibility to the next generation, because of our own love for our families and communities, it is time we women devote ourselves— wholeheartedly — to the business of making peace. (“Why Women?: Code Pink”)

Clearly their work resembles Ruddick’s analysis of maternal thinking and is a contemporary example of a motherhood methodology utilized in anti-war activism.

Mothers Acting Up (MAU), an affiliated organization with Code Pink, began in Boulder, CO in 2002 to mobilize the efforts of women as a means to “show motherhood as a large, impressive force to be reckoned with” (Osnes 81). Beth Osnes, a MAU activist, articulates that “mothers are a natural lobbying group for children” and that it is mothers’ political obligation to be a “voice to the voiceless” (82). The groups organized events for Mother’s Day to address the need for children in the U.S. and abroad, drawing specific attention to material issues like

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9 Mothers Acting Up dismantled in 2011, but members are affiliated with and various coalitions and other maternal-activist engagements, for instance, World Pulse, CARE, ONEMoms, and The Motherhood.
education and health care, a subject of great importance to feminist antimilitarism which is further discussed in Chapter Four.

The existing context of motherhood methodologies also came up in the interviews I conducted with feminist peace activists. As Anne Marie of Boulder Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom argued, collectively mobilizing in any capacity as women is powerful. As she stated:

I kind of agree with Emily Green Balch [a Quaker peace activist who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1946] on this...she said she always felt like, well what she wanted were people committed to peace work, so if an appeal to motherhood worked. To me just being there, being is what matters. I realize there can be a strong maternal moment in various organizations… Just this morning Amy Goodman was in Buenos Aires interviewing people who were deeply affected by the 30,000 disappeared and talked about the Madres. They are still marching. There it became an incredible voice, because well they killed some of the original ones because the way they were able to identify as mothers gave the power to become a formidable force against the dictatorship. Some of them were politically transformed into a left-wing politics, not just “where is my son or daughter?” But a politic to reform the state. A lot of them stayed focused on wanting to know what happened to their children. For me personally, I think women are an important force in every area of life.

I deeply respect the contributions of these activists and the continued importance of these actions against war and violence, and echo Anne Marie’s sentiments of desiring any formation necessary to increase feminist actions against war. My concern remains that neoliberal marketization persistently utilizes motherhood tropes to mold an acceptable means of domesticity in modern
feminine subjectivities. Hence, these actions are undermined by an already existing insistence on women’s care-giving roles.

While few activists I spoke with recited the “Moral Mother” discourse, Theresa of WiB New York Public Library articulated a belief that women’s innate identities were tied to an antiwar politic, stating “I really think women are naturally peaceful, the nurturers of life, they can resolve conflicts without killing.” This statement suggests that essentialist narratives may still drive some women’s peace efforts; however, Ruddick, Di Leonardo, and the “Mothers and Others” actions point to the existing critique of accepted maternal=pacifist essentialism. For this reason, I am more concerned with how the contemporary mobilization of motherhood is impacted by the discourse of the “new momism.” It is integral to examine how contemporary models of antiwar motherhood methodology have been situated in a context where motherhood is ideologically marketed to support white, heterosexual postfeminist consumption.

A turn to politicizing motherhood and maternal symbolism rebinds us to the dichotomous structures masculine/feminine and male/female, which the modernist process naturalized and deployed through imperialist and colonialist processes of capitalist accumulation contingent on a (hetero)sexist division of labor. This division is revived in the neoliberal political economy, but is more flexibly used to benefit a diverse consumer market. The works of postcolonial feminist studies scholars, such as Gayatri Spivak, have long theorized the romanticized notions of maternal feminine imagery within nationalist narratives. Similarly, Lata Mani’s work has urged postcolonial scholars to recognize the ways traditions are mapped onto women’s bodies, furthering colonial-modernist citizenship discourses that construct women as bearers of the nation through motherhood. Such discursive formations normalize and render natural the
compulsory relationship of women as bound to the (hetero)sexist division of labor through the (re)production of nation.

The first portion of this essay has been devoted to the introduction of the “new momism” terrain and examining a selection of activism and scholarship that employs motherhood methodologies. Using postcolonial feminist and queer studies critiques, I will examine three problematic tendencies with politicizing motherhood—“othering” reproductive bodies, rationalizing repronormative motherhood, and rendering women’s bodies as public spaces. I’ll discuss the ways celebrity and conservative political motherhood processes dominate public attention, thereby subverting the critiques of nationalist militarism that peace activists seek to resist.

**“Othering” Reproductive Bodies: Imperial Maternal Subjectivities**

Media constructions of Hollywood “celanthropy” and adoptions as political acts have reconstructed the identities of celebrities as activists. These identities are based within existing colonial and imperial geopolitics that posit white feminine subjectivities as “Moral Mothers.” Moreover, the actions of celebrity mothers are more accessible and publicized as humanitarian activism, revealing the limits of motherhood methodologies.

Celebrity transnational adoptions have become extremely popular and visible in print and television media in the last five years. Popular music star Madonna and American actress Angelina Jolie have both been public mothers recently by way of transnational and transracial adoption. I am interested in addressing the historical and transnational contexts of power in

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10 It is not my attempt to morally situate queer theory as the panacea for ‘flawed’ feminist mobilizations, thereby “othering” the important contributions of feminist scholarship and activism.
relation to their existing motherhood. It is important to recognize the unequal power between the parties involved in these adoptions and how these power disparities play into the creation of ‘proper’ maternal identities.\textsuperscript{11}

Jolie was named a Goodwill Ambassador for the United Nations Commissioner for Refugees in 2001 after visiting refugee camps and using her celebrity identity to raise awareness about conflicts in Sierra Leone and Tanzania. Much public media attention has been focused on Jolie's philanthropy and humanitarian efforts, which are largely described as “raising awareness,” with refugees globally (“UN Works: Angelina Jolie’s Story”). Alison Trope, a cultural studies scholar, has critically referred to the media portrayal of her actions as the construction of “Mother Angelina” (154). Jolie has cited her work with the UN as integral to her heightened awareness of the needs of children abroad and also considers it part of her rationale for her multiple transnational adoptions. Jolie, who shares parental custody with Brad Pitt, an American actor, has now adopted children from Ethiopia, Namibia, and Vietnam and given birth to three children (“Angelina Jolie Says Madonna’s Adoption Risky”).

Madonna provides another example of maternal visibility through transnational adoption. In 2008, she made a short documentary film \textit{I am Because We Are} about the experiences and struggles of the Malawi people in Africa. That same year there was controversy over her adoption of David, a two-year old child from Malawi. After the adoption, she received a great deal of international and media criticism, as it was discovered the child had a father who was

\textsuperscript{11}Dian Negra and Su Holmes have theorized the need for a critical feminist media studies to approach the “new gendering of fame.” While many of these sexist ideologies are not new, the increased distribution of celebrity blogs via the Internet and simultaneous dismantling of the public/private divide in neoliberalism mandates new theorizations of genders relationship to political and media culture (Negra and Holmes 14-15). In this analysis I have used some online media sources to analyze the publicized lives of Angelina Jolie and Madonna, because celebrity media coverage also portrays the neoliberal context of commercialized public space.
under the impression the child was being taken to receive an education in the U.S. but would then return to his community. The court later ruled that the father had forfeited guardian rights. In 2009, Madonna adopted a second child from Malawi and has since worked with the Malawi government to build schools for children (“Madonna ‘Over the Moon’ About Finalized Adoption”). These stories are important for recognizing the way that this form of popularized “U.S. activism” is tied to existing imperialist power differentials. Both of these stories are steeped in the “white [wo]man's burden” underwriting colonialism. When examples of celebrity motherhood such as these are more readily available to the public than politicized maternal resistance, progressive acts utilizing motherhood methodologies that draw attention to the colonial roots in economic and militarist inequalities are diminished in comparison.

Jolie and Madonna as maternal representations construct the child of color's body as a monolithic representation of the “other.” The white mother is constructed as a “savior” to the child, who becomes representative of the presumed poverty or national strain, which in turn is viewed as completely disconnected from the mother’s own U.S. privilege. Celebrity transnational adoption is consumed as a politics of peace or activism through Madonna and Jolie’s maternal acts, as their adoptions are publicly stated to redress national and class privilege, through those very acts of national privilege. Under neoliberal citizenship, political acts are not only individualized, as in the individual must take on the task of social issues as the state becomes disconnected from the social, but also simultaneously viewed as acts of consumption. In this case, adoption by white affluent U.S. celebrity women of non-U.S. children is coded as a transnational act of consumption. Jolie herself stated in regards to a making another adoption during a 2006 interview with CNN’s Anderson Cooper, “another boy, another girl, which country which race would fit best with the kids” (Jolie qtd. in Trope 169). Her statement crassly
points to the notion of “choice” in adoption consumption. Viewing these acts as humanitarian and benevolent is based in the framework of a historical colonialist logic of white supremacy. Celebrity motherhood as a peace politic in the case of transnational adoption does not critique violences of the nation-state, rather it reinscribes the power dynamic of repronormative bodies through continued logics of the colonized “other” and colonial “savior.” Distant locations from the U.S. become simplified through the imagery of children, and privileged women's bodies become public spaces only through the gaze of heteronormative, nationalist, reproductive acceptance.

While Jolie’s adoptions have been portrayed as an act of humanitarianism, other mothers have been frowned upon for the reproduction of large families. In 2009, two years after Jolie’s most recent adoption, media covered the pregnancy of Nadya Denise Doud-Suleman Gutierrez, later called Octomom, who had octuplets through assisted reproductive technology in 2009. It was later discovered she had six children, was unemployed, and received social assistance. Doud-Suleman Gutierrez became a public spectacle of “bad motherhood” and her class position and racial identity were used as sexist arguments against social and public assistance (“Octopulet Mom Defends her ‘Unconventional’ Choices”). These two examples of celebrity motherhood offer a contemporary way of examining the accepted norms of white, nuclear motherhood. While Doud-Suleman Gutierrez is scorned for her maternal identity, affluent Jolie is depicted as a national maternal figure engaged in international human rights politics through transnational adoption.

This colonial discourse surrounding white maternal figures is, of course, not new. Rather, celebrity motherhood coded as peace relations heightens the need to recollect how “bad motherhood” tropes have historically been produced to create the “new momism.” As
ecofeminist scholar Greta Gaard, argues “the rhetoric and institution of Christianity, coupled with the imperialist drives of militarist nation-states, have been used for nearly two thousand years to portray heterosexuality, sexism, racism, classism, and the oppression of the natural world as divinely ordained” (29). The colonialist process in the Americas was based on this master mentality that feminized the land and colonized people through the masculinized violences of domination, constructing nationalism as a project of heterosexist violence (Gaard 27-30). The dehumanizing logic built into the naturalized dualisms of the master mentality sharpened the nationalist ideology of “us” and “them,” naturalized the colonial process, and provided the basis for capitalist accumulation.

In colonialist discourse the act of sexuality is confined to the ability to procreate, and it is more recently associated with the act of consumption, a necessity for the nation and capitalist accumulation. This naturalizing historical perspective, “of woman’s ‘true nature’ with motherhood has been used to oppress women just as the equation of sexuality with procreation has been used to oppress both women and queers” (Gaard 27). Sexual acts that did not fit into procreation, Gaard argues, were subjugated by colonialists to construct dualist-gendered norms and construct heterosexual nuclear families that would support the work of capitalism. This means that a major component of capitalism relies on heterosexist existence as a norm to construct productive and consumptive family units.

Colonial mentality, which is evident in Jolie’s and Madonna’s statements, was utilized to shape the leisure identity of motherhood versus the solely productive bodies of child bearing. Rhoda Reddock’s analysis of the geopolitical maternal experiences points to a history of producing the acceptable maternal figure:
These more than a hundred years that ‘slave women in the Caribbean were neither wives nor mothers’ were exactly the same period that women of the European bourgeoisies were domesticated and ideologically manipulated into wifehood and motherhood as their ‘natural’ vocation. While one set of women was treated as pure labour force, a source of energy, the other set of women was treated as ‘non-productive’ breeders only. (Reddock qtd. in Mies 92)

In fact much of postcolonial feminist critique, and later Mies’ work, argues that this dialectical process pitted women against each other in the capitalist system, as well as men and women of both the First world and Third world. Thus, through the colonialist process of capital accumulation, the sexual, racial, and international divisions of labor were created.

Reproduction and sexuality have never been private domestic matters for colonized people, and nationalist structures and ideologies have always deployed the domestic in an effort to transnationalize economy. Briggs’ important work in Reproducing Empire further examines colonial divisions between women in relation to the empire building of the U.S. in Puerto Rico. U.S. reproductive medical companies utilized women and men of the island in exploitative medical testing with pseudo-feminist arguments, or imperial feminism, as well as claims that poverty would be alleviated, in order to institute population control policies (74-107). Sterilization policies and over-population discourses are connected to the nativist projects of white-supremacist eugenics, a process of preserving nationalism. Pitting white women’s reproduction on the U.S. mainland against Puerto Rican women’s reproduction transnationally reconstructed the boundaries of domestic and public, making Puerto Rican women’s bodies public spaces onto which imperialist nationalist discourses were inscribed through empire building (Briggs 142-160).
Examining the ways “imperial feminism” was used in Puerto Rico reveals that the public/private spatial divide is a modernist dualism of citizenship from which racialized, gendered, and sexualized meanings have been mapped. However, this divide has been a space of political contention, whereby the assumed fixed nature of the dualism reveals the fluidity of public/private and their constant co-construction. The historical construction of women as mothers for the nation exacerbates this divide to politically deploy women as agents of the nation. Women’s bodies as mothers of the nation, in the case of imperialist bourgeois nationalism, does not radically remove them from the relegated private sphere, but reconstructs the nation as their domestic sphere, whereby they must protect the nation as their home and children. Hence, “Moral Mother” offers women a double-edged sword because the nationalist political identities being offered to women are:

- Particular reincarnations of particular visions of the past. These visions, usually called ‘traditions,’ are no such thing: They embody the hopes for future power and domination by those who manufacture them against the perceived threats of a pluralistic world that requires accommodation and compromise. Yet these “traditions” generally have one thing in common: the subservient status of women and often the restriction of women’s lives to a rosy vision of domesticity and motherhood. (Papanek 70)

Motherhood politics not only supplements the imperialist argument for protecting the “nation” but also, historically and currently, is used in nativist logics of reproduction. Reproductive motherhood, as articulated in the theories of Gaard, Reddock, and, Briggs utilizes the capitalist space of the private/public divide to construct white, middle class bodies as properly reproducing bodies, while colonially constructing women of color and working class women’s bodies as politically public spaces and “threats” to the nation. This violently proliferates the subjugation
of the bodies of women of color as the public terrain in order to control their identities politically within the public sphere. This precludes certain women from achieving the necessary marketable maternal identity that is increasingly popular and also shapes the utility of motherhood methodology political activism.

Mothers Acting Up, a more contemporary example of motherhood methodology, directly addresses this colonial context, as they acknowledge how “American politics has far-reaching effects on the quality of children’s lives. Whether babies in South Africa get the antiviral AIDS drug they need is based on a political decision to allocate aid to that country…I must speak up and advocate on behalf of these children” (Osnes 82). What remains concerning is that within the marketized maternal identity and existing imperial feminist history, this political statement is not dissimilar to the popularized forms of celebrity adoptions as activism, whose individual philanthropy efforts are recoded in the media public sphere as “peace actions.” While MAU’s actions recognize an imperial process that impacts the lives of children globally, it too is situated in the neoliberal and racial framework that affords white, U.S. women a public maternal platform as voices for children.

Repronormative Motherhood: Making a Future for the Children

The use of children as an emotional appeal for national politics serves the ideological function of constructing “good families” and model consumer citizens. Despite conservative backlashes to non-normative families, there continues to exist important resistance by queer families to access protections and rights from the state; however, some scholars argue this reifies heterosexual hegemony. Women’s reproduction is bound to institutional acceptance of white, heterosexual futures.
In opposition to a politics of peace and motherhood methodologies, but also a very visible example of celebrity “momism,” is the resurgence of the conservative women's front. Former Alaskan governor and GOP 2008 vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin has become a central figure for the neo-conservative right and a tokenized image of nationalist femininity. During the 2008 campaign, a raced/classed/sexed repronormativity became a spectacle as her daughter, Bristol, became an iconic figure of patriotism through teen-pregnancy. As a pregnant, white, affluent teen, she became identified with “family values” and was afforded the privilege of a private identity rather than presented in the public as a social ill, as teen pregnancy has long been racialized and classed. Bristol Palin's body became a marker for political rhetoric around the “family value” of anti-abortion politics, yet her agency to define her national identity remains intact through privileges of race, class, and sexuality.

Using her political momentum and contested fame from the 2008 election, Palin has continued to speak on behalf of conservative women using maternal rhetoric. The November 2010 election has been termed the “Year of Women” due to the number of female candidates running. Palin has used this to rally women around a romanticized essentialist notion of “Mamma Grizzlies.” Speaking to the newly formulated Tea Party, a fundamentalist branch of the Republican Party, Palin informed women that such rhetoric is successful:

It seems like it's kind of a mom awakening in the last year and a half, where women are rising up and saying, 'no, we've had enough already.' Because moms kind of just know when something's wrong... Here in Alaska I always think of the mama grizzly bears that rise up on their hind legs when somebody's coming to attack their cubs, to do something adverse toward their cubs. You thought pit bulls were tough? You don't want to mess with the mama grizzlies. (“Sarah PAC advertisement”)
“Mamma Grizzlies,” is a political celebrity motherhood that calls upon maternal femininity as a political resistance to national change. Even more appropriative, Palin has stolen feminist rhetoric to suggest that she is a feminist, based on the fact that she is a female politician. Yet, her political stances are vehemently anti-social welfare, anti-healthcare reform, queerphobic, and against reproductive education and options for women. This political celebrity motherhood actively engages in the acceptance of nationalist stance of women embodying and publicly protecting the nation, as their family.

Clearly, the role of motherhood becomes bound to a concept of time, as it is women’s reproductive ‘nature’ that creates the future of nationalist time. Recognizing the simultaneous construction of a normative “motherhood” time as tied to capitalist production, which supports imperialist militarism, is necessary to dismantling assertions of women’s naturalized role to motherhood, which Palin and the McCain campaign did by structuring her credibility around motherhood. This simplistic formation of heterosexual reproduction for the Nation has been more recently challenged through the introduction of the “normative” lesbian and gay family. Jasbir Puar’s *Terrorist Assemblages* examines the historical construction of the nation as heterosexist, but argues that the current U.S. imperialist endeavors in Iraq and Afghanistan have been shaped by the illusion of an expanding sexual citizenship. Puar challenges us to critically deconstruct the way U.S. nationalist politics of sexual exceptionalism—by which she means the nation-state positioning itself as unique in its “tolerance” of certain forms of homosexuality—have constructed a homonationalism that is complicit with heterosexual configurations of the nation (*Terrorist Assemblages* 3-11). Puar asserts that neoliberal sexual politics of homonormativity depoliticize queerness by advocating consumption and monogamous domesticity as keys to accessing both private sphere protections and public sphere rights, thereby
upholding and supporting the framework of the public sphere as a heteronormative nationalist space. Her analysis points to the necessity to move beyond a critique of radicalized motherhood methodologies as solely heterosexist. The ideological function of appropriating non-heterosexual families benefits imperial nation-building by creating further consumptive niche markets.

The “gayby boom,” a popular terminology coined in the 1980s during the growing political discussions surrounding LGBT families, continues to garner political attention as gay and lesbian families have fought for political and legal gains in securing rights to marriage and adoption. As Laura Briggs argues in Somebody’s Children these demands for political equality have also been problematically tied to transnational and racial power dynamics of adoptions. In the 1990s Guatemala was one location that affluent lesbian and gay couples could legally adopt, which Briggs argues aligned LGBT adoption “rights” with the “‘right’ to take other people’s children” (242). In this sense, the national acceptance of LGBT families is bound to the acceptance of lesbian and gay people as white and middle-class. Beyond LGBT investment in sexual and familial citizenship through neoliberal political models, for instance, marriage, the “gayby boom” has also placed lesbian and gay people in a problematic relationship to the continued racist policies of U.S. social services “taking of children” from families and placing them in “safer” foster families. Gay and lesbian couples have become the “safety valves” for U.S. neoliberalism that refuses to socially support low-income children and families, and financially place the responsibility on lesbian and gay foster parents (Briggs, Somebody’s Children 241-243).

The policed and therefore racialized and classed normative ways in which we interact in public and private spaces are directly tied to the family. In a controversial queer analysis of
time, Lee Edelman suggests that queer people should refute the nation’s attempt to reconfigure queer identities as consumptive for capitalism. Much of his analysis is tied to Lauren Berlant’s concept of infantile citizenship, which renders the nation an entity existing solely for the future of children and the protection of their innocence. Primarily appropriating maternal power, state paternalism constructs citizens as the children of the state, whereby no real change can occur because it is our repressive parents that control the nation. Arguing for futurity as a “death drive,” Edelman suggests that queers must politically take the stance of “not ‘fighting for the children’” (Edelman 3). Edelman argues against reproductive futurism, which he defines as “an ideological limit on political discourse as such, preserving in the process the absolute privilege of heteronormativity by rendering unthinkable, by casting outside the political domain, the possibility of a queer resistance to this organizing principle of communal relations” (Edelman 2).

Reproductive futurism, or the ideology of defending the nation for the children, plays an important role in the continued logic of imperial nationalism that constructs an “us” and a “them” in order to protect and expand the nation for the futures of children.

Katherine Franke’s term “repronormative” cohesively connects Edelman and Berlant’s ideas of nation time and reproduction with Gaard who suggested that imperialist nationalism defined sexuality solely in terms of procreation. Repronormativity is the naturalization of sex acts as procreative. This defense of heterosexual reproduction obscures the drive of the nation “as the biological fact of heterosexual procreation bestows the imprimatur of meaning-production on heterogenous relations…the Child, [carries] the cultural burden of signifying futurity” (Edelman 13).

As Lauren Berlant argues, this repronormative discourse is the biopolitic that controls our concept of temporality as linear progress: “a nation made for adult citizens has been replaced by
one imagined for fetuses and children” (Berlant 1). Sarah Palin’s identity recentralizes repronormative motherhood and performs the duty of conservative backlash to lesbian and gay families. She deployed five children and an anti-reproductive justice platform in 2008 and insisted that her identity as a mother qualified her to limit the rights women had over their own bodies, for “the children.” Feminist antimilitarist rhetorical claims of “speaking for the voiceless” have a dangerous connection to the politics of conservativism that posit restrictions on others’ rights in the name of the future (Onses 82).

**Women’s Bodies as Public Spaces**

The contemporary climate surrounding women’s agency to determine whether or not to be mothers is another space of concern within this politicization of repronormative futurity. In February 2011, Georgia State Representative Bobby Franklin introduced a bill that would make abortion illegal and criminalize miscarriages. The bill considered fetuses full human beings, carrying a sentencing of murder for miscarriages. Applying our standards of personhood to the zygote stage, the bill emphasized patriarchal political contempt for women’s bodies. In the “new momism” the “public surveillance of the pregnant body and mother” is one more place that proper motherhood is marketed and policed (Thompson 6). Berlant’s argument centers on the transitioning nation, in regards to the reconstruction of cultural citizenship in a post-Reagan era in which neo-conservatism advanced the economic agenda of neoliberal imperialism. Examining the failed promise of maternal value and social worth, which was supposedly extended to any woman, she challenges us to recognize maternal legitimacy as an exploitation of nationalist feminine imagery.
Fetal motherhood, along with the nativist ideologies of the “pro-life” movement, have constructed a rhetoric where the “pregnant woman becomes the child to the fetus, becoming more minor and less politically represented than the fetus, which in turn is made more national” (Berlant 85). This articulation provides evidence that motherhood methodologies have interrupted the public/private spaces in troublesome ways, but that they have not dismantled the repressive exploitation of labor relegated to reproduction, the biological and social of the private sphere. Instead women are reified as infantile to masculinist public sphere politics, which women cannot fully access. Pregnant women and mothers find no location within the politically discursive spaces of the public and private.

The pregnant body, which Berlant suggests is culturally read as future motherhood, becomes a marker from which public debates are constructed. The pregnant body is read as a public space. This is the reason many women’s bodies as spaces that virtual strangers feel compelled to touch, constructing her within the terrain of a national imaginary that valorizes fetal motherhood. Her body is thereby bound to the reproductive future of a repronormative citizenship and signifies “an identity machine for others, producing children in the name of the future, in service to a national culture whose explicit ideology of natural personhood she is also helping to generate” (Berlant 85). This construction of every woman as a potential mother is one of the main functions of a postfeminist “new momism” where marketable motherhood is the act of proper “choices.” However this act of “‘Choice’ degrades a woman’s decision about whether to become a mother by tightly associating that decision with the most essential consumerist concept of our time: choice” (Solinger qtd. in Thompson 26). As Rickie Solinger has argued, the Hyde Amendment framed abortion as a consumptive practice which was legal but not funded, therefore an accessible right, the “customer’s risk.” This poses even further dangers to a
motherhood methodology that aligns maternal identity as a political coalition, as only certain women in the current U.S. political climate are seen as marketable mothers, and therefore allowed public voices. The encroachment on funding for women’s reproductive freedoms are further discussed in Chapter Four.

As Edelman and Berlant point out, U.S. culture has been constructed around a time frame that naturalizes the private/public divide of women’s maternal and reproductive roles. This time is based on a future that obscures the perpetual violences of imperialist, colonialist, nationalist, and nation-state building through the seemingly virtuous narratives of a future for Children. A queer oppositional politic of futurity offers one frame to destabilize the naturalized politics of capitalist reproduction. As Edelman suggests, reproductive futurity is the mere repetition of the violent past, and we must instead insist “the future stops here” (31).

Nurit Peled-Elhanan, an Israeli feminist peace activist whose work has been associated in the broad network of Code Pink activism, spoke at the 2004 European Social Forum to address the impacts of imperial racism inherent in the occupation of Palestine. Her daughter’s death by an act of terrorism in Jerusalem shapes her understanding of this imperialism: “It’s time to make it clear that the death of one child, any child, be it Serbian, Albanian, Iraqi, or Jewish, is the death of the whole world, its past and its future” (Peled-Elhanan 104). Her remarks utilize the emotional appeal of children, but offer a stark contrast to the political momism of Palin, as her narrative and subsequent actions involve a material understanding of occupation. Furthermore, her statement troubles the commercial frameworks of time by posing temporality as a simultaneous operation of the past and future. The harrowing story surrounding her daughter’s death is a site of resistance, albeit not a commercial one like Palin’s, making her story virtually unheard in the process of violent nation-making.
Conclusion: Where Do We Go with No Future?

Motherhood methodologies have to contend with three strains of problematic politics: colonialist and imperialist constructions of certain women as properly reproducing bodies, the concepts of repronormative futurity that privileges heterosexist reproduction and therefore denies some women’s resistance and existence, and women's bodies as public spaces, rather than embodied political actors. As I have argued, motherhood methodologies have a historical importance in antimilitarist activism and continue in the critical work of such organizations as Code Pink and Mothers Acting Up. However, the contemporary context of celebrity and political mothering mitigates the efficacy of these efforts, as they have advanced platforms for their maternal identities in the commercialized terrain of the “new momism.”

Some antimilitarist actions articulate theorized critiques of the culture of neoliberal “momism.” In 2012 prior to Mother’s Day, Code Pink activist Laura Kacere actively confronted the commercialization of Mother’s Day and demanded a return to Howe’s feminist peace demand argued:

We are also experiencing a still-rising commercialization of nearly every aspect of life; the exploitation of every possible human event and emotion at the benefit of corporations. Let’s take this Mother’s Day to excuse ourselves from the pressure to consume and remember its radical roots – that mothers, or rather all women, in fact, all people, have a stake in war and a responsibility as American citizens to protest the incredible violence that so many fellow citizens, here and abroad, must suffer through. (Kacere “Radical History of Mother’s Day”)

Her words offer an important recognition of the ever-increasing commercialization of motherhood. But as I have shown in the course of this chapter, these important actions remain
tied to our contemporary discourses surrounding the public spectacle of mothers. The self-sacrificing mother of the “new momism” era can also be the politically engaged mother demanding war-free environments for children.

In the neoliberal era, properly consuming bodies become normalized through consumer citizenship, as are notions of the “good” and “bad” mother. Neoliberal citizenship and identity are more complexly woven into consumer capitalism as a liberatory politic, towards national inclusion, which bolsters the structure and policy of the nation-state. Overwhelmingly, the visible examples of maternal politics in the United States—transnational adoption by celebrities and pro-nationalist Republican women’s actions—reproduce the notions of neoliberalism embedded in the imperialist politics and ideologies of militarism.

Nationalist anti-woman stances that are read in the neoliberal terrain as individual “choice” have rendered the possibility for visibly anti-woman ideologies to be identified as feminist, which further obscures the political resistance of feminist activist labor against the nation-state. More importantly for my analysis, popular forms of maternal politics, such as celebrity motherhood, reveal the limits of motherhood methodologies. As motherhood increasingly becomes a commercialized public discourse, less attention can be drawn from the strategic alliance of mothers against war and militarism.

As scholars and activists, it is imperative to recognize the important role that women identified as mothers have played in speaking truth to the powers of imperialist militarism. However, we must recognize the dangerous interpellation of nation-state time and space that a motherhood methodology can enact. Examining theories of anti-colonialist and queer temporality in relation to the contemporary spectacles of maternal identity, I have suggested that
stances to end nationalist militarist violences using motherhood methodologies often bind us to oppressive constructions of neoliberalism.

As I showed in the case of female reproduction, only certain motherhoods have been celebrated by the state, meaning that a transnational use of motherhood methodologies perpetuates material privileges for certain bodies. Repronormative time frames uphold capitalist heteropatriarchy in the production of a nation for “children and fetuses” (Berlant 1). What the examples of popular maternal politics through celebrity spectacles such as “Mamma Grizzlies” and transnational adoption suggest to me is that feminist activists need to remain attentive to neoliberal configurations of maternal imagery that occupy the national space. Edelman’s revolutionary suggestion that we stop the future is not the same as the end that seems near through destructive militarism, but this queer theoretical tool might offer valuable insight for activist temporalities to “Stop the Next War Now,” as Code Pink has demanded (Code Pink).
CHAPTER THREE

Neoliberal Feminist Warriors: Militarized Female Subjects and the Privatization of Risk

Figure 3.1: “Hey Taliban.” MARS Special Operation Group. 2 October 2012. Web.  

In this chapter, I examine how U.S. militarism has been recoded by neoliberal cultural discourses as a site of resistance to oppressive forces. The portrayal of exceptional gender equality in the U.S. through the very institutions that impede democracy has created the guise of Western modernity through depictions of gender, racial, and sexually neutral militaries. Figure 3.1 offers a brief glimpse into the operation of such a narrative, the original image that was released January 1, 2012 by the MARS Special Operation Group Facebook Page, a conservative U.S. group that seeks to “defend the constitution” through military operations, stated “Hey Hadji, look up in the sky” (“MARS Special…”). This image relied upon the Islamophobic sentiment that has been accepted through popular culture and racial profiling post September 11, 2011. The edited version shown in Figure 2, which still relies on a colonial sexist discourse but is devoid of overtly racist language, was released by “The Tea Party” Facebook Page October 2, 2012 with the updated tagline. The fact that this edited image garnered 60,988 “shares” and 113,580 “likes” on the popular social networking site Facebook speaks to its resonance with a wider audience (“The Tea Party”). Rather than view this image as an extremist or fringe perspective, I take its popularity to be indicative of larger cultural anxieties surrounding gender, race, nation, and militarism. Placing these political discourses about cultural citizenship in dialectic relationship with contemporary feminist antimilitarist arguments offers a fuller depiction of the contested terrain of neoliberalism that activists must contend with.

12 Image citations are available but have been removed for copyright purposes.
The visual rhetoric displayed in the above image endorses the notion that female subjects may work toward the “liberation of women” through their military service. Women’s identities within the military are created through the narrative of white U.S. modernity that stands in contrast to the oppression of Middle Eastern women subjected to an extremely patriarchal culture. This image popularizes the developmental narrative that individuals are the protectors of the U.S. nation and formerly infantilized women have made significant strides, moving from the private sphere into the militarized public sphere. Within neoliberal cultural constructions citizens are portrayed as self-governing subjects with more individual responsibility, which replaces the social and economic responsibilities of the State. Citizens are encouraged “to see themselves as individualized and active subjects responsible for enhancing their own well being” and that of the nation state (Larner 11). The Facebook image offers an important site for a discussion of the roles women occupy within the U.S. nation-state.

Utilizing the imagery of “women’s empowerment,” the military signifies the notion of diversity, making the message readily available across sex identity. The military becomes an imagined space of progressive equality and gendered modernity where gendered power and privilege are absent when the final goal is national protection. Post-September 11, 2001, military enlistments have increased. The racial and gendered makeup of the U.S. military, which also includes non-U.S. citizens, suggests a growing rate of women and people of color in the military since the inception of the “Global War on Terror” and subsequent economic recessions. Women’s participation in the military comprises 20 percent of the U.S. armed forces, with eighteen percent of new enlistees after 2003 being females. Over 50 percent of enlisted women

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13 The rate of non-U.S. citizens and U.S. enlistment drastically dropped in 2005 as the U.S. entered the third year in Iraq. President Bush offered citizenship status for services as a means to increase enlistees from Mexico, Nigeria, India, Germany, and Philippines.
are women of color (Eisenstein, “Resexing Militarism…” 30). While these numbers suggest growing racial and gender diversity in the military branches, I am more concerned with the public discourse and site of popular culture that develops an image of the military as a space of progress, and how this image of progress plays a role in U.S. exceptionalist narratives and imperial democracy.

More specifically, this chapter critiques popular discourses of modernity and progress and analyzes how they emerge in the individualized narratives and imagery of gendered and sexually mixed U.S. militaries. I will examine popular culture and media discourses about women in the military, military families, and gay and lesbian soldiers in relation to feminist antimilitarist activists’ critiques of neoliberal equality. I will then outline several of the theoretical understandings of gendered power in the military and contemporary notions of female empowerment. I contend that femininity and definitions of female empowerment under neoliberal cultural citizenship are intentionally constructed as multiple rather than universal in order to render gendered power dynamic as ambiguous and at times non-existent.

Militarism and militaries are masculine gendered institutions and the role of female, gay, and lesbian soldiers is being used to obscure the (hetero)masculinist violence that is reproduced in militarism. Examining how gender is used to produce new social ideologies about the representative roles of U.S. imperialism and militarism are central to this analysis in order to show the complexity of gender and militarism in the neoliberal economic and cultural terrain. Hamilton Carroll’s Affirmative Reaction, a study of the transition of U.S. white masculinity in a post-industrial, neoliberal economy argues that forms of masculinity have become “mobile and mutable” in order to obscure the very existence of white and male privileging social frameworks. Utilizing his ideas for examining heteronormative white masculinity as labile, or its “ability to
shift locations and its ability to change its nature,” I will examine how U.S. femininity is discussed and expressed in relation to militarism through popular discourse (Carroll 10). While masculinity is privileged materially and culturally in patriarchal society, an examination of femininity points to the ways in which transforming public discourses and media imagery of the traditional gendered binary into more complex performances and existences is a means to reify existing institutional power through the claim of a genderless or gender-neutral social reality and narratives of neoliberal modernity. This is integral to Eisenstein’s own critique of women as “sexual decoys,” which uses gender bending as a sign of progress to further militarist culture (Sexual Decoys 7-10). This too is a central aim of my discussion; however, through the dialectic of these “sexual decoy” cultural productions and activists’ responses I seek to intervene in the current scholarship with new ways to read resistant actions to this cooptation and complacency.

Engaging public discourses about “The War on Terror” and role of citizens in the military necessitates that we understand imperialism more complexly than simplistic logics of “white male violence.” Understanding the racial and gender makeup of the military as more diverse, both confronts assumptions about the race and gender of violence and offers new ways of considering how neoliberalism obscures militarism. Anti-imperialist feminist critiques of “The War on Terror” openly confronted the Bush administration’s guise of feminist humanitarianism in the form of brute militarism to protect Afghan women. Iris Young’s assertion that militarism rests upon “masculinist protection” points to the gendered logics and connections between the State military apparatus and the heterosexuality of obedience of the domestic home (115-118). Masculine protectionism is the very argument utilized when women’s bodies and identities become the excuse for occupation. Many feminists, such as Miriam Cooke, Lila Abu-Lughod, and Jasbir Puar, echoed concern about masculine protectionism by building from Gayatri
Spivak’s critique of colonial intervention as “white men saving brown women from brown men” (297). While this power differential and the use of women as symbols of culture and the justification for militarism are deeply connected to colonialism, to flatten the complexity of these two different periods renders invisible the new economic context of neoliberalism. As Purmina Bose argues in “From Humanitarian Intervention to the Beautifying Mission,” we must remain attuned to the complexities of the new economic context as well as the racial and gendered complexity of new national and militarized contexts. As my opening discussion of the “Hey Taliban” image and current military gender and racial makeup suggests, the diversity presented by the military very much constructs a new way of thinking about how the imperial is not only composed of white male bodies but also of women and people of color. Building on Bose’s critique of the collapsing of the colonial and neoliberal militarism, I will examine how the individualization of risk plays an important role in U.S. individualized liberal democratic ideology and in the way that we understand power as tied to nation, race, class, gender, and sexuality.

The ideological function of “democracy” in imperialism is intentionally constructed to control access to resources not in a colonial sense but through the incorporation of Third World economies into the larger neoliberal political economy. Under neoliberalism, capitalism and markets become both the economic and the cultural zones for constructing individual identities. “Imperial democracy,” as Zillah Eisenstein and Arundhati Roy point out, is the practice whereby violent procedures of imperialism, like the normalization and valorization of the military, become reified as access to neoliberal individualism and progress (Eisenstein, Sexual Decoys 6; Roy, An Ordinary Person’s Guide to Empire 138). Understanding U.S. national security claims and use of military for the proliferation of “democracy” abroad as tied to the interpellation of the
U.S. citizens’ identities as well as militarism exposes how liberal formations of feminist, anti-racist, and queer liberation struggles become appropriated for imperial democracy.

**Taking Issue with ‘Equality Feminism’: Defining Post, Neoliberal, and Neoliberal Imperial Feminism**

Mainstream feminism today within the USA has been co-opted and cheapened into the narrow struggle to fill men's shoes—while preserving the capitalist, racist, imperialist, and even patriarchal inequalities that make up the very fabric of those shoes. ‘Feminism’ is bombing Afghanistan to liberate women. ‘Feminism’ is breaking gender roles by posing for bikini shots and joining the military. ‘Feminism’ is becoming a power-CEO or secretary of State Condoleezza Rice or Hillary Clinton. (Chew 88)

Many antimilitarist feminist interviewees that I met with between 2008-201114 echoed Amelia Chew’s argument that we must question what feminism becomes within neoliberal U.S. culture. Activists’ nuanced understandings of gender in relation to their actions against war were highly critical of the essentialist understanding of women as pacifists or peace-like and men as the sole perpetrators of war. As Anne Marie of Boulder WILPF pointed out “Women need a much bigger role in international diplomacy. I’d [rather] go for a feminist man than a hawkish woman, as I identify feminism as a politics.” Understanding feminism as a politics that critically examines roles of power and the impacts of gender is central to understanding the masculinization of the military and subsequent neoliberal cultural citizenship.

Feminist adaptations to neoliberal cultural and economic formations have been termed “postfeminism” (McRobbie 7), “neoliberal feminism” (Grewal 28), and “neoliberal imperial feminism” (Bose 1). Each of these terms aids in a better recognition of the commodification of

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14 See introduction and Appendix A, B, C for reference to activist interviews and methodology.
women and use of narratives of democracy in imperial and capitalist claims. The roots of each of
these have been extended in dialogues within feminist theory and activism. Equality or liberal
feminism as the notion of women seeking equality and access with men in liberal institutions has
been a space of controversy within multiple branches of feminist thought. Radical and
intersectional approaches to the category of gender have critiqued the assertion that justice can
be afforded through the very institutions that have been constructed out of histories of systemic
violence and bigotry (The Combahee River Collective 164). Specifically examining the military
as a contested space of feminist resistance, Ilene Rose Feinman’s *Citizenship Rites: Feminist
Soldiers and Feminist Antimilitarists* places liberal feminist claims of access to the military
institutions and the front lines of combat, like those of the National Organization of Women
(NOW), in relation to feminist antimilitarist claims, like those of Women in Black, that
outwardly refute militarism and view it as a main site of injustice. She argues that unless we
understand their claims as necessary to desires for new gendered citizenship formations activists
will be unable to construct new models of activism.

I very much am aware and take seriously the varying and complex reasons for both men
and women enlisting in military services. I especially understand female soldiers’ self-
depictions as reflections of their desire for full citizenship and career opportunities. The military
has offered women a space for upward mobility, especially given marginalization through race
and class in certain workplaces. For instance, citizenship has been offered to immigrant groups
in exchange for military service. Women and men who enter the military do so for a variety of
reasons, but those reasons are drastically limited when we look at the intersections of power and
privilege. In this chapter, I am less concerned with women’s individual engagements with the
military and more concerned with the political and social context in which forms of female
“empowerment” are dependent upon state institutions, like the military, against which feminist antimilitarists have long been struggling. While interviewees disproportionately argued against women being able to enter the military for empowerment, most articulated an understanding of the classed and racial underpinnings of military enlistment. As Hedy of New York Union Square Women in Black argued, “people go into the military for various reasons. Now a lot go into it for economic reasons and especially the worse the jobs and unemployment gets, there is an economic draft. I know that women can go into the military because they live in small towns and are lesbians. I mean people go in for various reason; I think it is a horrible solution.” Without condemning individuals, Hedy acknowledges the inequities that have shaped many citizens’ decisions to serve in the military. It is clear that militarist society offers political belonging to citizens through its military institutions.

Multiple feminist scholars have theorized how the changing cultural and economic terrain has an impact in political and social responses to feminist action. Working from existing critiques of liberal feminist understandings of access as defined by women’s entry into the relatively prosperous class of a male-defined work force, Barbara Smith critiqued liberal second wave feminist activism for its limited goals: “Anything less than this vision of total freedom is not feminism, but merely female self-aggrandizement” (49). Access to capitalist institutions as “self-aggrandizement” and consumption have in neoliberalism become the only available space to access a form of agency that is solely based in individual meritocracy, personal responsibility, and the acceptance of capitalism as a source of power. In neoliberal “equality,” choice becomes a principle of empowerment, which is “a modality of constraint” (McRobbie 36). If gender progress can only be imagined to exist within current institutions it will always perpetuate the oppressive dynamics rooted in those systems, rather than dismantle them.
As Angela McRobbie argues in *The Aftermath of Feminism*, Susan Faludi’s analysis of backlash, or the resistance to women’s and people of color’s gains in the job market and political culture through the feminist movement and civil right’s activism, is not a fully accurate way for understanding how Western culture, and specifically American and British culture, have reacted to gender and racial progress in the past sixty years. Rather, in her conceptualization of “postfeminism” McRobbie argues that within neoliberal economic and cultural shifts the way in which feminism has been seriously considered and appropriated in current concepts of gender and women’s lives voids their former political importance:

Elements of feminism have been taken into account, and have been absolutely incorporated into political and institutional life. Drawing on a vocabulary that includes words like ‘empowerment’ and ‘choice,’ these elements are then converted into a much more individualistic discourse, and they are deployed in this new guise, particularly in media and popular culture, as a kind of substitute for women. These new and seemingly ‘modern’ ideas about women and especially young women are then disseminated more aggressively, so as to ensure a new women’s movement will not emerge. (McRobbie 1)

Clearly, this context changes the way we think about feminist theory and action in relation to neoliberal capitalism and militarism. Rather than equating the entry of women into male-dominated institutions of the military as social progression, we must question how representations of female soldiers are used in a political or ideological manner.

Inderpal Grewal’s concept of “neoliberal feminism,” similar to McRobbie’s analysis of postfeminism, argues that the construction of women as working professionals, or in the case of the military “Army Strong,” sells the notion that feminist justice can and has been achieved through the systems of neoliberal capitalism. Women’s entry into the armed forces challenges
feminist antimilitarist activists and scholars to rethink the ways in which we articulate and resist “empowerment.” Likewise, the selling of military service as a choice needs to be more thoroughly examined, as it glosses over the complex limitations of access in capitalism. These limitations produce a gendered, racialized and classed military draft in the U.S. that is simplified into a multicultural and diverse military force. Female soldiers are subjects produced through discourses of choice, a foundational concept of liberation in the politics of neoliberalism. This neoliberal construction of multicultural diversity in the military concurrently bolsters imperial democracies as based in the framework of citizen choice and participation and obfuscates the realities of domestic imperialism in the form of gendered/racialized/sexed violences both in the U.S. and abroad.

The selling of military service as a “choice” exemplifies how U.S. consumer practices and notions of choice are transnationally constructed and tied to new formations of imperialism based in the neoliberal market. The Bush Administration’s argument that Afghan women needed liberation is directly tied to a hegemonic construction of a female individualized subjectivity. Bose’s concept of “feminist neo-imperial individualism” utilizes a transnational feminist analysis of discursive constructions of Western women as individually free and as the saviors of Third World Women. Neoliberal cultural citizenship constructions of women and individual subjects that “universalize a bourgeois form of feminism dedicated to capitalist empowerment, and conceives of modernity in American consumer practices” makes what postfeminism and neoliberal feminism point to as a redefinition of cultural citizenship an explicit element of imperialism. Imperialism, Bose argues, is not only militarist occupation, but it is also the cultural message of superiority regarding Western femininity (Bose 7). Her analysis specifically points to Western beauty parlors as sites of transnational imperial inquiry. By tracing the
implementation of beauty parlors into Afghanistan post-U.S. invasion, Bose articulates how consumer practices and standards of Western femininity or “face cream feminism” have been central aims to imperial feminist ideologies (22).

While present analysis does not explicitly deal with the colonial savior narrative of feminist neo-imperial individualism, I have shown the way in which gender and race are utilized in imperial democracy and demand a more complex analysis of militarism. Juxtaposing feminist antimilitarist critiques of women’s access in the military with feminine subjectivities in the United States, I will examine how individualization of gender and progress undermine the possibility for collective consciousness and political change.

Gendering Militarism and Individualizing Identity

“My senior year [of high school, 1991] I noticed that the pro-war fervor seemed to require as little critical thinking as the football fervor.” –Liz, Peace and Justice League of Spokane

“Women bus drivers wear ties, they look like they are in drag...they dress up as men, the shoes are men’s shoes. When women take a role that has been exclusively male, they have to take on all the costumes of men” –Hedy, New York Union Square Women in Black

Both of these antimilitarist activists’ statements portray the understanding of the institutionalized power of gender involved in the hegemonic masculine culture of militarism. While Liz analyzes the cultural masculine bond of both the military and sports culture, Hedy addresses the precarious space that women occupy within male and masculine dominated institutions. Importantly, Hedy analyzes gender as a performative act that does not necessarily
equate political subversion with the material privilege of maleness. However, female masculinity, as theorized by Judith Jack Halberstam, is not mere mimicry and should be understood as the site of denaturalizing gender (Halberstam, *Female Masculinity* 1-2). I find Hedy’s analysis of the lack of power women hold in male (also capitalist) spaces limits the importance of personal gendered bending subversion, which should not be politically denied.

Echoing the Women in Black notion of differing gendered cultural experiences of war, many antimilitarist feminist claims seek to expose the gender power inherent in war in regards to masculinity as both an institutionalized existence and an embodied identity (Women in Black). As Cynthia Enloe argues, militarized masculinity supports militarism, with an emphasis on fearlessness, strength, and an absence of emotions (Enloe, *Maneuvers* 48-51). Through a process of the military beyond people, for instance in the lack of human understanding in terminology like “collateral damage,” neoliberal economic ties to militarism and constructs current notions of individualized heroes. The neoliberal economic agenda for free markets utilizes a gender-neutral language of “markets,” “individuals,” and “choice.” But the societies and world in which neoliberal logics prevail is still a gendered world, and neoliberalism has specific gendered politics. The “individual” in democratic liberal theory has generally been taken as and constructed out of the interests of white males. Under neoliberalism, the dismantling of the welfare state in favor of privatization, as discussed in Chapter Four, generally weakens the position of women and exacerbates the feminization of poverty, while the increasingly unregulated power of transnational corporations augments the wealth and power of an elite group of business people, generally men. Similarly, militaries, which have been privatized and corporatized, are bolstered by neoliberal economic policies. Militaries are not gender-neutral spaces, but spaces that uphold and privilege masculinity. As Jennifer Turpin observes of
patriarchal militarism, “masculine values must be privileged over feminine values, and masculine values become equated with military ones” (16).

Mary, a participant in the 2009 “Gaza Freedom March” and member of the Palouse Peace Coalition, critiques the notion that women’s involvement in the military makes it less masculine stating in response to my question “does women’s involvement change the military?”

No, it is just progression towards aggression and domination. I want to go back to the Israeli military; you see a lot of black Ethiopian Israelis are some of the worst [most violent] as well. And I kept thinking, "Why are they the worst? Why are the women the worst?" And I started thinking where do people fit in power? Who is at the bottom? There are a lot of pretensions about society, maybe they are more aggressive to show that they can partake in that atmosphere...When I went through the first time I was very curious about these women in the military and at the check points, they carried a big weapon across their chests and one looked like she could be in high school. I asked her what that felt like and she started crying and said, "I use to like it, like it was powerful, and now I hate it."...I think the physical action of carrying a weapon, what is that? How does it give an individual power?

Her example points to the ways marginalized people may utilize the tools of power they are given. Operating in these spaces does not change or radically critique these institutions but instead upholds the existing operations of power. In a variety of national contexts, as Enloe points out, “yoking citizenship to military service has been a deliberate and political enterprise” (Maneuvers 247). While she examines political citizenship as a motivation for military involvement, recognizing how cultural citizenship is constructed around the valorization of the military is central to critical consumption of the contemporary images of female soldiers and
leaders. Female soldiers’ identities are often contradicting and always constructed in otherness to the definitions of male soldiers, and are tied to racial formations, as Mary’s response to my questions indicates.

Cultural citizenship is the socially constructed inclusion of certain privileged identities (Miller 28-30). As pointed out in McRobbie’s theorization of postfeminist citizenship, women’s identities are tied to consumption; similarly neoliberal citizenship is tied to our relationship to consumer markets. Therefore, cultural citizenship reproduces gendered and sexed privileges while at the same time it sells the concept of inclusion and equality through connection to the market. As Yvonne Tasker points out, the role of the military woman has always been about narratives of modernity, although she is a contradictory icon (3). As Tasker’s Soldier Stories historicizes, women have been bound to the tropes of the WWII munitions laborer, the sexualized nurse, military wife or girlfriend, or the military female rape-avenger (3-17). The ability to consume these tropes, or to be interpellated as the individual beholden to these identities, gives weight to the notion of individualized identity, which become entrenched in our understanding of cultural citizenship.

Dominatrix, Barbie Warriors, and Dutiful Wives: A Multiplicity of Feminine Military Roles

An examination of public discourse and imagery surrounding women in the military reveals that women are always constructed through difference to that of male soldiers, sometimes to valorize their strength and at other times to define women as not belonging in the military. In either case, feminism may become and has been implicated in the role of women in the military. Feminist rhetoric is both incorporated and lauded as important to U.S. military progress and as the cause of women’s excessive violence in military operation. For instance, Lynndie England
was one of eleven military police prosecuted in 2005 for the sexualized torture and abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib.\textsuperscript{15} As Kelly Oliver points out, the conservative magazine \textit{The American Spectator} argued these abuses are “a cultural outgrowth of feminist culture which encourages female barbarians” (\textit{American Spectator}, qtd. in Oliver 23). In this case, feminism becomes implicated in military torture, while individual female soldiers are pinned as the sole reason for women’s lack of military capabilities. The postfeminist assumption that feminism has created a masculinist mentality in all women thereby becomes central to obscuring the socialized patterns of masculine violence in militarism. Militarism, which literally entails the construction of “enemies” as subhuman, is embodied through the corporeal reality of England’s victims, men of color, the “other.”

The logic that females are biologically not prone to violence and therefore more peaceful has been central to many claims for barring women in the military (Feinman). In postfeminist popular discourses, conflicting narratives about gender offer space to suggest there are not rigid sexual and gendered standards. Robert Dreyfuss’ March 2011 column “Obama’s Women Advisers Pushed War in Libya” featured in \textit{The Nation} depicted this fissure in women being either nurturing and therefore innately peaceful or obsessed with power and violence because of feminist urgings of equality. As he stated:

\begin{quote}
We’d like to think that women in power would somehow be less pro-war, but in the Obama administration at least it appears that the bellicosity is worst among Hillary Clinton, Susan Rice and Samantha Power. All three are liberal interventionists, and all
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{15} While space here is limited for analysis of the Abu Ghraib torture, U.S. military police sexualized torture of Muslim and Arab men has been examined by Isis Nusair, Kelly Oliver, and Gargi Bhattacharyya as an (ethnocentric) Orientalist construction. Imperialist media and political culture suggested that these violences are only culturally offensive because, unlike Judeo Christian Western “progressive sexual thinking,” Muslim and Middle Eastern people are “backwards” in their understanding of sexuality.
three seem to believe that when the United States exercises military force it has some profound, moral, life-saving character to it. Far from it. Unless President Obama’s better instincts manage to reign in his warrior women—and happily, there’s a chance of that—the United States could find itself engaged in open war in Libya, and soon. (Dreyfuss)

In this case, female politicians, not female soldiers, are scapegoated for United States military intervention and violence. Hillary Clinton, Secretary of State, is a “warrior woman,” who along with her other female counterparts, must be reigned in by a rational male politician. In both accounts of torture and political guidance of the military, the rhetoric becomes a trope of blaming women for improper use of power, power that is assumed to be only for men. Indeed, most telling of this sexist cultural ideology is the 2010 release of a novelty kitchen set that includes a Hillary Clinton “nutcracker.” Her national political power is depicted as so utterly emasculating that consumers can put her back in where she “belongs,” the kitchen, with this politicized purchase (“The Hillary Nutcracker Website”).

Racialized emasculation by powerful women is the rhetorical imagery offered in Dreyfuss’ analysis of Obama and the literal action of England’s torture of Arab men, although they offer different contexts, U.S. national politics and the global imperialism. While postfeminist media and social discourses have incorporated feminism as McRobbie suggests, as a movement fundamental to women’s increased rights, it has also been used more simply in what Susan Faludi referred to as a “backlash.” The present backlash suggests that women have overstepped their gender roles through the emasculation of males, a fear that has been used to undercut the importance of the feminist movement (Faludi 1-5; McRobbie 1). Racialized emasculation is also tied to the current narratives of “too powerful women.” Richard Fung’s analysis of biological racism presented in the 1988 work of Philippe Rushton’s psychological
sexual characteristics as racially embedded suggests that white male sexuality is always set as the norm, while Asian and Black men are presented as sexually deviant in a pivoting way that they are either hyper or hypo sexualized (181-183). Fung argues that these assumptions are tied to the historical dynamics of colonialism and sexualized racism of the national imaginary. The pivoting role of hypo and hypersexualized black masculinity obscures this national imagination. The hypersexualized historical depiction circulated during Obama’s 2008 election when he was referred to in sexualized racist terms, such as a “long legged Mack Daddy.” The hyposexualization exists in Dreyfuss’ argument that Obama is the victim of emasculation by powerful women. Later in September 2012, Vice-Presidential candidate Sarah Palin used a similar tactic of phallocentric shaming and desexualizing Obama’s masculinity, stating after the attacks on the U.S. embassy in Egypt: “We already know that President Obama likes to ‘speak softly’ to our enemies. If he doesn’t have a ‘big stick’ to carry, maybe it’s time for him to grow one” (Palin qtd. in Wing).

All too familiar, in the colonial context the “other” is feminized. England’s torture of Arab men shows how this dehumanization and power differential is present in contemporary imperial contexts through the act of sexually posing men in submissive manners. In 2005, the same year England was prosecuted, it was leaked that sexualized torture by female soldiers dressed in miniskirts and bras used fake menstrual blood to interrogate Saudi prisoners of Guantanamo Bay (Oliver 26). Here, femininity is celebrated if only useful to militarist tactics and also becomes a weapon. However, the U.S. response to this tactic was largely an assumption that Muslim men would be distraught only because of their ‘backwards’ cultural views on sexuality or female corporality. Conversely, Angela Davis challenges such cultural essentialism in Are Prisons Obsolete? stating: “I am always suspicious when culture is deployed as a strategy
or an answer...Why is it assumed that a non-Muslim man approached by a female interrogator dressed as a dominatrix, attempting to smear menstrual blood on him, would react differently from a Muslim man? These assumptions about culture are themselves racist” (Davis qtd. in Oliver 27). The England occurrence and the torture at Guantanamo are clearly both disturbing acts of violence where the aim is the feminizing torture of men by women, which is considered the ultimate act of emasculation. The gendered nature of these torture crimes exhibit the point that women’s bodies are either integral to militarism or inappropriate for military service because of brash female behavior. The connection between the emasculating forms of torture and the political emasculation of the president in regards to military intervention point to one trope of women in institutions that are male defined, namely that their power is inappropriately used and results from forms of female liberation.

Another image and cultural identity proliferated of female soldiers is hyperfeminization. Even Barbie, the epitome of hypersexualized female imagery, performs the duties of the nation. In fact, Mattel offers an array of Marine, G.I. Joe counter-part, and Army Barbies. This “girl power” mentality sold through the image of soldier Barbies manifested itself in a real life context through the media construction of Jessica Lynch. In 2003, Private Jessica Lynch was injured and then cared for by Iraqi medical units; however, the media stories surrounding this event suggested that she had fought for her survival. Private Lynch later admitted that she did not in fact fire a shot, nor was she harmed by the Iraqi doctors who cared for her (Howard and Priverda 298). This media fiction plays a central role in the national narrative to bolster public support for the war and also to support military morale because her story provided the narrative of “courage under fire.” Lynch can exist as the “tough as hell girl” while also representing dominant heteropatriarchal beauty because the blonde white female was depicted both as a
symbol of modernity through military involvement and also as the warrior. The white woman soldier becomes the narrative of Western military modernity as well as an icon for postfeminist success, much like the introductory image offered in Figure 3.1. Lynch’s own words, which she stated upon being found by fellow soldiers, demonstrates her desire to be recognized within the culture of a supposedly genderless military citizenship: “I’m an American soldier, too” (qtd. in Oliver 41).

What Lynch’s story reveals is the fracture between “women” and “soldiers” in a culture that so readily uses women’s bodies as symbols of Western political progress (Howard and Priverda 298; Oliver 41-43). Nothing more accurately points to this confusion of feminine identity in the masculine identified institution of the military than the concern with beauty politics. While Lynch in many ways represents a real life caricature of the Mattel Barbie series, women soldiers’ lived experiences of feminine policing and soldier performativity differ within the military institution. For instance, Army Regulation 670-1 enforced a white beauty standard by prohibiting women of color to wear hair in dreadlocks. Women’s ability to wear make-up is also contested terrain, while it is clearly stated that make-up is allowed, women are to look “natural” at all times (Kirk and Okizawa-Rey 495). More recently, women’s fingernails have become a topic of debate, specifically as to whether French manicures are acceptable. In October 2011, Raymond Chandler, the sergeant major of the Army, started a discussion on Facebook to poll Army responses to new regulations on tattoos, earrings, and French manicures. One female non-commissioned officer respondent replied:

How have we gone from debating whether women should be allowed into combat arms branches to if we should be able to wear earrings? This is the United States Army, and there is no time for 'pretty' here. I am a female [non-commissioned officer] NCO and
while I embrace my womanhood, the bottom line upfront is that ponytails, French manicures, earrings, etc., will not enhance my ability to train and lead soldiers . . . Please don't empower me as a female, empower me as an NCO. (Rozen)

Her statement, much like Lynch’s, speaks to the cognitive dissonance central in female soldier’s identities. They are expected to embrace their role as soldiers and eschew their femininity, or they do not belong in the ranks. Lynch’s statement more clearly exemplifies the desire to be genderless in her capacity as a soldier. Both of these examples point to the ways that individual soldiers internalize their identity as “women” and “soldier.”

McRobbie argues that postfeminism “allows” for women to revel in what once were considered sexist traditional gender roles, because of the notion that their individualized empowerment equates a “choice” to remain in the domestic sphere and signals an end to the once forced (hetero)sexist division of labor. To be sure, another way that women become enmeshed in the structure of militarism is through the role of the soldier’s wife (Enloe, Does Khaki Become You? 46). Post-September 11, 2001, depictions of military families has become central to producing nationalist patriotism. In 2004, Oprah Winfrey, a culturally influential celebrity par excellence, threw the “World’s Largest Baby Shower” and presented 640 expecting mothers at Fort Campbell Army Base a baby shower. The shower was a national spectacle as it was televised and Oprah even appeared wearing fatigues, which situated her as a military member or supporter, part of the “military family” (Williams and Pate).

The baby shower displayed commodified motherhood, as discussed in Chapter Two, with celebrity guests such as actress Heather Locklear and supermodel Elle Macpherson. The actresses offer the expecting mothers their “expert” advice on the proper consumer products and baby accessories to make mothering easier, as to say proper motherhood can be accessed through
the correct purchases (Thoma, “Buying up Baby” 412-416). Locklear shared her favorite gift with the Fort Campbell mothers stating: “I just want to say that when I was pregnant, it was just the most joyous time. I hear there are babies due any minute. So I wanted to tell you about one gift that I got for my baby shower was this thing called a Boppy®. I hope you enjoy them!” Macpherson presented the women with a gift from her own designer line of Maternelle nursing bras and reminded the women: “Happy bonding with your baby. Here's to the sexy mom in all of you!” (“Baby Shower Surprises”). These examples of material commodities offer a glimpse at neoliberal feminism which is “dedicated to capitalist empowerment [and consumer choice], and conceives of [female] modernity as rooted in American consumer practices” (Bose 7). Winfrey’s and other celebrity supporters for soldier’s wives played into the national narrative of the individualized (female) citizen’s role of “Supporting the Troops” through the act of material consumption.

Political support of military families has also been symbolic of this heteronormative framework. First Lady Michelle Obama and Jill Biden, the wife of Vice-President Biden, kicked off their “Joining Forces” Campaign in April 2011. This campaign urges all Americans to recognize the role that they can play in supporting military families, as a service to the Nation. Obama states, “unlike our troops, military families don’t wear uniforms so we don’t always see them” (qtd. in Hall). The campaign not only urges individual citizens to play a role in supporting military families but also enlists businesses, non-profit organizations, and celebrities in the same valorization. The first business supporter became Wal-Mart and Sam’s Club, who offered jobs to military family members who could transfer their job to nearby bases along with their military transfers (Hall). The “Joining Forces” connection to corporate Wal-Mart more directly
illustrates the corporate/military tie, but also points to the socioeconomic strife faced by those in the military and their families.

While media and political culture celebrate military families’ reproduction and livelihood, not all families fit into this accepted framework; soldier mothers and gay and lesbian families are withheld from repro and heteronormative cultural citizenships. In November 2009, Alexis Hutchinson, an Army cook, was arrested by military police after she refused to deploy for Afghanistan because there was no one to care for her infant child, whom she was told would be put into foster care while she was away. Hutchinson was later discharged from the military and stripped of benefits given to service members and veterans (Bynum). Notions of familial “choice” in this case are rendered invisible and the female soldier becomes, once again, a questionable subject for service. Similarly, until October 2012, gay and lesbian soldiers were refused the right to identify their partners and families and otherwise punished by military law. While the recent repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” (DADT) has been lauded as an effort towards gay and lesbian equality, the neoliberal assumptions about identity, choice, and the risk associated with service as openly gay or lesbian in the military has been a contested debate amongst feminist antimilitarist and queer activists.

A brief analysis of contemporary imagery surrounding female soldiers’ relation to military culture shows the multiple ways that narratives can be utilized to both valorize and demonize female military service and support. These often conflicting yet diverse images offer different ways for citizens to consume the ideology of “choice” and “progress” surrounding female service. As McRobbie points out in her analysis of postfeminism, the modality of “choice” is limited to one of assumed freedom to consume, which does not create material gain or cultural transformation (3-10). Rather, these modalities are made accessible to young women
through a symbolism of freedom. What these conflicting images offer in a larger sense is the narrative that militarism is not the space it once was—racially segregated, homophobically bigoted, and a male-only space. Instead, military spaces have been recoded as sites of cultural resistance to oppressive forces. In short, imperial democracies suggest that self-determination and justice can exist in the very sites that reproduce cultural violence. Therefore, military recruitment and service, which has increased because of the feminization and racialization of poverty, is obscured as a “choice.” While denying the very framework that constructs militarism and is used in the act of imperialism—patriarchal white supremacy—military institutions are instead presented as gender neutral and postracist.

**The Problem with “Choice” in the Privatization of Risk**

Whether the depiction is violent female soldiers and promoters of militarism led astray by feminism, the poster woman for postfeminist “girl power,” or naturally devoted mothers, it is clear that women soldiers are depicted in an array of images. However, the images are always outside of the naturalized role of militarized masculinity. In many ways, these depictions suggest a variety of representations in which neoliberal culture is no longer tied to the archaic, stereotyped tropes of the media, but to a diversity of images. This representation also becomes additionally conflated with the notion that individuals also have a diversity of opportunities in the neoliberal society and are no longer held back by the oppressive social apparatuses. Within neoliberal cultural citizenship, individual citizens have more responsibility placed on individuals. In this sense, citizens are expected to enhance their own well being because they are afforded “choices” and the state has supposedly relinquished oppressive doctrines. As David Eng argues, “[t]oday we inhabit a political moment when disparities of race—not to mention sex, gender, and
class—apparently no longer matter; they neither signify deep structural inequities nor mark profound institutional emergencies” (3).

In describing the context of what she terms the “intimate public sphere,” Berlant analyzes how Reagan and Thatcher avoided multicultural transformations by forcing the politics of race, class, gender, and sexuality into a privatized citizenship, rather than a political public sphere (4-16). This literally forced the blame and violence of racism, sexism, classism, and homophobia onto the individual, meaning that if they experienced such forms of oppression they had clearly not made correct “choices” as there were no longer formal sanctions for inequalities. The repealing of DADT, for example, places the intimate public sphere at the center of contemporary military culture. If the law no longer formally discriminates as a matter of policy, little can be done to redress private acts of homophobic violence. DADT, much like earlier debates about women’s involvement in the military and the racial segregation of the military, removes an oppressive policy but doesn’t directly change the enforcement of the institution. For instance, women in the military continue to experience higher rates of sexual assault than civilians, nearly one in three, by their own colleagues. This is not often a fact discussed in the “choice” of enlisting in the military. As Liz of Spokane PJALS stated when asked her opinion of the repealing of DADT and the increased number of women in the military:

I don't agree with that. PJALS is based in principles of non-violence, tactically, strategically and philosophically. That comes from a stance that sees violence as both individual, like rape, or acts like placing a bomb at a march against racism, OR you know institutional policies that create poverty or policies that create bombs being dropped…Last year our former director of GLBT issues marched in a parade with a sign that said “Don't Ask Me to Die, Don't Tell me To Kill.” So we had this conversation, you
can have an opinion and a critique, but we are also an ally and we aren't going to condemn the success of the movement we say we are an ally to in our Newsletter. You want to be an ally but you also think it is messed up... We ended up writing a piece about military integration has only ever been a step towards justice, so we looked at how racial integration was not an end, but was a victory along the path. That is a great way to look at it and talk about it. Being treated like a full citizen in a fucked up society means we can get more rights.

Her statement parallels both Eng and Berlant’s theories that policy cannot, and should not be the markers by which we understand justice; rather, it is a reformulation of the power structure. While Liz ultimately states PJALS supported the repeal in their newsletter, the peace organization was conflicted with condoning institutions, which they realized could not bring about peace and justice.

In an increasingly unstable economy, the privatization of risk demands that citizens act and care for themselves. The risk associated with military culture via war violence is the quintessence of this ideology, but is also offered as an individual alternative to unemployment or poverty. With the increased racialization and feminization of poverty it isn’t surprising that increasingly women and people of color fill the ranks of military service. Questioning the limits of material mobility discredits the notion that citizens have free “choice” in the matter of joining the military ranks. As activists pointed out, many gay and lesbian youth join the military to leave small towns and working class youth often view it as an opportunity to travel or earn an education.

The introductory imagery “Hey Taliban” clearly points to the glorification of the role of militarism in U.S. culture and transforming gender identities. It also sutures female identity and
citizenship to the support and practice of militarism, which I have shown is obscured by neoliberal concepts of progress. The construction and representation of “choice” as quintessential to neoliberal female empowerment is inextricably linked to contemporary images of women in the military; however, “choice” remains the limited modality that confines female soldiers to a national militarist personhood, a masculine derived space where her cultural citizenship always remains suspect.

**Conclusion**

The use of women’s and racial and sexual minorities’ empowerment in militarist discourses intentionally obscures military power structures and imperialism. These widely proliferated messages in U.S. public discourses impact citizens’ understandings of foreign policies and military intervention. The use of women’s “empowerment” in the military to project sexism onto Third World women’s experiences obscures the failure to address sexism in the U.S. This political denial alters an individual’s understanding of global gender relations and even furthers the historical and contemporary role of U.S. militarism. The fame of the recent Kony 2012 campaign offers a final site to consider the impacts of U.S. exceptional narratives.

The “Invisible Children” Kony 2012 campaign to stop the violence and civil unrest inflicted by the Ugandan Lord’s Resistance Army leader Joseph Kony went viral on March 5, 2012 and garnered 70 million views within four days and raised five million dollars in 48 hours through the selling of Kony 2012 commodities, such as bracelets and t-shirts (Curtis and McCarthy). The popularity of the video and campaign is a complex subject, as it speaks to the desires of individuals to address human rights abuses but also exists within the colonized terrain analyzed throughout this project.
The campaign’s financial and viral success exemplifies the way in which individual citizens internalize militarized narratives of U.S. exceptionalism regarding human rights policies. As numerous queer scholars articulate such narratives, also known as “pinkwashing,” construct a progressive modernity around social issues, like the rights of sexual minorities, in order to deflect attention from imperial policies (Franke; Puar, “The Golden Handcuffs of Gay Rights”; Schulman Israel/Palestine). Likewise, Teju Cole, a Nigerian-American author, criticized the campaign as a production of the “white-savior industrial complex” which “supports brutal policies in the morning, founds charities in the afternoon, and receives awards in the evening” (Cole). His association of this project with critiques of the corporate-military relationship in the “military-industrial complex” aptly points to a “white-washing” of militarism as an imperial democracy.

“One Thing We Can All Agree On” as reads the poster from the Kony 2012 campaign, shown in Figure 3.2, articulates a desire for bipartisan support of military intervention in Uganda obscured as a symbol of “peace.” The Kony 2012 campaign ultimately relied on a “pinkwashing” of U.S. imperial interventionist violence by advocating it as the progressive method for social change. The tremendous popularity of the Kony 2012 campaign and U.S. military interventions in Uganda suggest to me that feminist antimilitarist critiques of neoliberal imperial activism must be taken seriously if they are going to achieve a political voice in the current political sphere. As Krista of Spokane Women in Black expressed about the current terrain for activism, “[w]e want a monolithic message because it is effective, but it is bumper

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16 Image citations are available but have been removed for copyright purposes.
sticker politics...we have a tendency to try and oversimplify feminism, these things are too complex.”
CHAPTER FOUR

A “War on Women”: The Relinquishment of Social Welfare Funding and the Gendered Impacts of a Militarized Economy

Figure 4.1: “Counter Earth.” Ruben Bolling. 24 June 2011. Web.17

Ruben Bollig’s 2011 comic strip “Counter Earth” depicts the operation of patriarchal political and militarist culture by constructing a parallel between the procedures required of President Obama to wage war and those demanded of women accessing abortion. In the fictitious depiction, President Obama and Vice President Biden must travel a far distance, inundated by images of “collateral damage,” and wait three days to make a decision about war. Obama is ultimately denied access to federal funds. The cartoon aptly portrays U.S. culture’s impediments of women’s abortion access and rights in relation to the overzealous acceptance of militarism. The context of the image more importantly offers a powerful parody to the political context in 2010 and leading up to the 2012 election season, in which increasingly conservative attacks on women’s existing reproductive rights and public acceptance of copious rape rhetoric became commonly known as the “War on Women.”

Many scholars have critiqued the U.S. rhetorical imaginary that persistently refers to social, political, and economic issues through the language of militarism, from a “War on Poverty” (which is rarely funded to the extreme extent conventional “wars” have been), a “War on Drugs,” and a “War on Crime.” Zillah Eisenstein, for instance, has poignantly referred to the “War on Terror” as the “War of Terrorism” as a way to rhetorically reframe this militarized ideology. War as a “cultural metaphor” naturalizes militarism and normalizes the mentality of war and killing, “‘war’ as a metaphor obfuscates” (Eisenstein 19). While the above cartoon

17 Image citations are available but have been removed for copyright purposes.
satirically brings gendered experiences to the forefront, it still utilizes war as a cultural metaphor, one that our national imaginary has too quickly accepted as a status quo.

The “War on Women” provides a useful site to consider how war saturates our everyday life, and even in comic humor it desensitizes us to the brutal material realities of those implicated within U.S. imperialist endeavors. For this reason, it is more important to consider what a “War on Women” means in diverse national contexts and under “scattered hegemonies,” as the experiences of women in occupied zones of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Palestine surely have qualified U.S. militarism as a war against women (Grewal and Kaplan 1-3). Furthermore, as Elizabeth Martinez argued in her 2003 essay “Looking for Color in the Anti-war Movement,” there has always been a “war at home.” This war is waged against communities of color and immigrants and must remain a central organizing point for a successful antimilitarist movement.

Examining the so-called Republican “War on Women” in US economic and socio-political contexts illuminates how feminist antimilitarist practices interrogate the relinquishment of social welfare funding as tied to national militarist priorities. It expands on existing scholarship on the history of U.S. peace movements and the transnational turn in Women’s Studies and American Studies, by pointing to actions that complicate simplistic formulas of “local”/“global” and “national”/“transnational.” Using this feminist theory, I show how the impacts of cuts to social welfare have rolled back civil rights gains and impacted the social and economic landscape for activist movements. Finally, this chapter provides examples of how feminist antimilitarists both challenge and are influenced by the “War on Women” through the examples of Code Pink, Women in Black, and the Peace and Justice League of Spokane’s economic analyses of “home” and transnational solidarity efforts.
“The Nation Cannot Be Taken For Granted” 18

Virginia Woolf’s 1938, *Three Guineas*—structured as a response to a male who asked for her participation in preventing war—was written in the context of the escalation toward WWII. Woolf examines war as inextricably linked to male-dominated institutions such as the military and education system within the British Empire. She argues that in order to prevent war we must invest in women and women’s education. The guinea, a gold coin, Woolf states, must be utilized to rebuild the college into one that is fit to educate women. She insists that evaluating gendered economic priorities will lend itself to the prevention of war. *Three Guineas* remains an important source for women’s peace organizing, but is also not without critique. Uma Narayan, a postcolonial feminist philosopher, argues that the antinationalist sentiment in Woolf’s most cited quote, “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) 19 situates the Nation as solely a “patriarchal construct” (Narayan 37). Narayan argues that instead we must recognize the Nation and nationalisms as a site for feminist intervention, which recognizes struggles as bound to national contexts through the multiplicity of diverse experiences in transnational economic structures. By attending to issues within the nation, feminists will also achieve greater gender and economic global justice.

18 Gayatri Chakravarti Spivak, “French Feminism Revisited.”
19 Such statements of nationless identity and womanhood are frequent in feminist scholarship. For instance, Emma Goldman’s 1934 “A Woman Without a Country” similarly critiques war time and experiences of citizenship around the ethnic persecution of Jews, communists, and feminists. Gloria Anzaldúa’s 1987 *Borderlands/La Frontera* examines the contradiction of nation in relationship to feminist and queer identity stating, “As a *Mestiza* I have no country, my homeland cast me out; yet all countries are mine because I am every woman’s sister or potential lover. (As a lesbian I have no race, my own people disclaim me; but I am all races because there is the queer of me in all races)” (80). I point this out, as I think that Narayan’s critique of Woolf is important to transnational feminist theory; however, I also think that Goldman, Woolf, and Anzaldúa’s antinationalist critiques importantly point to the contradictory relationship that marginalized people have to the construction of the Nation, an experience worthy of analysis.
Citing Spivak, Narayan claims in order to do so, “the Nation Cannot Be Taken For Granted” (37).

Analyzing the efficacy of transnational feminist networks growing out of women’s human rights demands, Amitra Basu argues that North and South political and economic divides that exist in geopolitics impact feminist organizing across national borders. The 1995 Beijing Women’s Conference brought some of these tensions to the foreground in feminist debates as the South was recognized as dealing with the local economic and material issues, and the North with global visions. This binary of South/Local and North/Global pointed out some of the issues with organizing under the universal category of women (Basu; Cockburn, *The Space Between Us*; Ferree and Tripp; Moghadam; Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders*). It was at the conference that U.S. women of color organized to draft language with women from the Global South that encompassed the realities of multiple forms of domination (Basu 69-70).

There are uneven experiences and diverse social locations within feminist mobilizations, which impact the approaches to coalition efforts and feminist goals. Caren Kaplan and Inderpal Grewal theorize that the recognition of “scattered hegemonies” allows for a fuller understanding of the relationship between gender and “global economic structures, patriarchal nationalism, ‘authentic’ forms of tradition, local structures of domination, and legal-juridical oppression on multiple levels,” rather than a universal experience of women *qua* women (13). The concept of

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20 Often cited as the first transnational feminist network, the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom began in 1915 as a response to World War I. They advocate women’s participation in peace-building for global security. Important contemporary movements have been built out of their efforts, such as Women in Black and Code Pink. Several of the activists I met with were involved in the WILPF. The 2000 UN Resolution 1325 mandates the need for a gendered perspective in post-conflict resolution and rebuilding. WILPF existing network and guidelines has guided the application of 1325. While it is indeed a success of feminist peace activists, it has also been critiqued as Western in its construction of universal human rights and liberalism. See the work of Nicola Pratt and Sophie Richter-Devroe in “Critically Examining UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security” for a further analysis.
“scattered hegemonies” discloses that there are multiple capitalist, patriarchal, colonialist, and racist formations. It is important to recognize communities’ diverse experiences at the intersections of these scattered formations in different historical and temporal trajectories. This insists that we problematize simplistic dichotomous categories of “West/East”, “North/South”, and “First/Third” in order to recognize these definitions as co-linked through shared, unequal histories. Recognizing nations as a space to contend with the local and global policies of economics, Basu argues, “global visions need to be further infused with local realities, while appreciating that the local is not merely local, but infused with global influences” (Basu 76).

As taken up in the introduction of this project, the transnational turn in feminist activism and Women’s Studies and American Studies scholarship has shifted the U.S. centric lens to examine transnational economic and political flows of influence on knowledge production and power. For some the shift has had a narrowing outlook that renders an examination of U.S. racial formations obsolete (Soto 112). Expressing a continued concern with U.S. exceptionalism through the study of multicultural nationalism in the U.S., Soto urges feminists to consider whether transnational studies of imperialism and colonialism provide the right frameworks to acknowledge the racialization projects of the U.S. (112). Soto’s ultimate view is that a move out of the U.S. nation-state will further relegate U.S. women of color to an invisible position within the study of capitalist accumulation.

In the process of theorizing transnational movements, it is important to heed Soto’s concerns because a failure to do so risks continuing some of the existing racist and xenophobic roots of some U.S. feminist discourses. Remaining attentive to the domestic and globalized impacts of U.S. imperialist projects is integral to understanding the domination and “otherness” that impedes the ability to construct feminist collectivities. Wilmette Brown’s *Black Women and
The Peace Movement critiques the white-centric approach to peace organizing during the Vietnam Era and 1980s transnational nuclear disarmament campaigns, which I analyzed in Chapter One. Brown argued as early as 1983, well before the transnational turn in the 1990s, that imperialist endeavors of the military-industrial complex are as much a U.S. domestic violence as an international dilemma:

The military monopoly of world resources: the arms trade to prop up dictatorships; the pillage of raw materials from the Third World; the concentration of industrial and technological development on the war machine means that in Bangla Desh women spend several hours a day just fetching water; while in Harlem or the East End of London, older women annually die of cold or starve to death with Reagan and Thatcher cuts. Between North and South, and in the South which is within the North, the military-industrial complex daily turns Third World countries and inner city ghettos into ecological disaster areas. . .the threat of nuclear war and nuclear power is inseparable from day-to-day military industrial repression: ‘sex’, ‘race’ and ‘class’ issues are ‘peace’ issues. (Brown 20)

Brown’s shift to the relationship of U.S. racist nationalisms and sexist economic exploitation builds from the argument that reductions in military spending and redistribution of those funds to provide for social welfare provisions. This view was central to both the 1960s Black welfare mothers Wages for Housework campaign, which were the roots of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s anti-imperialist analysis in his 1967 “Beyond Vietnam” speech. As he proclaimed, “A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual doom” (“Beyond Vietnam”). This material critique of diverse experiences under the nexus of the military-industrial complex in relation to Soto’s
concern about the move toward transnational feminism without an acknowledgement of racial formations within the Nation, points to the necessity of examining both the domestic and transnational impacts of the relinquishment of social welfare spending in favor of military spending. As Brown argues, “Pay women—not the military” (33).

Despite the limitations of Woolf’s antinationalist sentiment, *Three Guineas* still offers a necessary critique of masculine militarism with respect to the economic priorities of the Nation, a similar organizing tactic to Brown’s critical demand for an antimilitarist feminism of color. As Woolf concludes in her letter to an “educated gentleman” in *Three Guineas* war is a gendered affair: “So, Sir, if you want us to help you to prevent war the conclusion seems to be inevitable; we must help to rebuild the college which, imperfect as it may be, is the only alternative to the education of the private house” (49). The private house she speaks of is that of women’s relegation to the private sphere, her argument to move women to the college setting is hence an argument about the gendering of economic priorities.

The neoliberal economic history that has entrenched domestic imperialisms—the production and maintenance of inequitable economic distribution of resources, the theft of marginalized peoples’ labor, and the acceptance through national policies of domination—within the United States continues to prioritize military spending over social welfare programs. The U.S. “War on Women” exists as a paradoxical reclamation of terminology to address anti-feminist values and reify cultural metaphors of militarism; hence, feminist antimilitarist interventions point to a constant “talking back” to the priorities and demands of domestic imperialism (hooks 5).
The “War on Women”: A Social and Economic History

War rhetoric as an approach to social inequity was originally used to advance welfare state politics, which is in direct opposition to the contemporary “War on Women” that advocates the dismantling of a welfare state. President Lyndon Johnson’s “Great Society” policies and the “War on Poverty” increased government responsibility for ensuring adequate education and health care as poverty reduction standards. Some of the important anti-poverty measures included the Civil Rights Act and Food Stamp Act of 1964, the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act and the Social Security amendments creating Medicare/Medicaid of 1965, and the 1968 Fair Housing Act (Orleck and Hazirjian 3). After the 1970s, the backlash to civil rights gains were tied to material policies and presumed associations of race/gender to economic class. Since Reagan’s election in 1981, the U.S. has seen a dramatic upward distribution of wealth and subsequent increase in the economic divide between the wealthy and lower-income classes. As discussed in the Introduction, this has largely been accomplished through the deregulation of social programs and austerity measures that have resulted in the reduction of social welfare spending, in favor of “personal responsibility” and claims of welfare as “entitlements” which are not so conspicuously coded in racism, sexism, and classism (Spade 50-53).

Deregulation and reductions in social service funding are central demands of the laissez-faire economics and “development” policies of the World Bank, IMF, and WTO. Indeed, dismantling of social services has frequently been attached to loans from the IMF. Numerous postcolonial studies scholars and critics of economic globalization have tied this to the intended purposes of neo-colonialism (Harvey; Klein; Shiva). Naomi Klein’s popular political economic theory of “disaster capitalism” examines the role of deregulation post-September 11, 2001 as mandated through the “shock doctrine” (Klein 9). The shock doctrine, she argues, allows for
governments to impose oppressive political and economic policies in the wake of tragedy or
disaster with little resistance. In this case, deregulation, which had already grown popular in the
1980s through Reagan’s politics, has become even more evident in U.S. versions of “free trade
and democracy” both in militarized zones and domestically. For instance, in New Orleans post-
Katrina, President Bush suspended mandatory environmental protections, wage labor laws, and
school regulations (Klein 9-12).

Austerity measures, deductions on benefits and public services, on the poor, elderly, and
people with disabilities have masqueraded behind the neoliberal narratives of “personal
responsibility,” “choice,” and “flexibility.” In this economic context unions have been
dismantled and portrayed as stripping citizens of their “individual rights” or even as threats to the
economy. The “personal responsibility system” as an economic policy requires that individuals
ensure social protections, for instance health care, thereby letting employers and the State out of
obligations (Harvey 168). The 1990s saw the welfare state substantially weakened and an
exacerbation of the racial and class distributions of wealth, as trade liberalization became
increasingly popular through NAFTA, which domestically coincided with the “end of welfare”
under the Clinton Administration (Spade 51). The end of domestic welfare assistance meant a
rise in the feminization of poverty, fewer social services, and a steady incline in the
criminalization of the poor.

Susan Faludi’s 1991 Backlash: The Undeclared War on Women historicized the Reagan
politics that led to the political culture of criticism towards women and people of color’s civil
rights and reproductive rights advances. As I have discussed in the Introduction and Chapter
Three, scholars of postfeminist theory have critiqued the simplistic notion of a “backlash” in
favor of a recognition of the simultaneous incorporation and rejection of feminism within
political and media culture. Faludi largely examines advances for gender equity in the workplace and political conservatism towards women’s reproductive rights. Faludi’s framing of the backlash on women as a “war” is an interesting reappropriation of the welfare state language of the “war on poverty.” The strategic reappropriation of “war” is central to Faludi’s examination of sexist policies and media culture. A feminist project that reappropriates “war,” like Faludi’s, does not imply an uncritical acceptance of this cultural metaphor, but rather creates space to engage the politics of neoliberalism. Neoliberal policy and activist theories and efforts grow in tandem to construct a dialectic struggle against the prevailing forms of economic and social governance. This strategy reveals how race, class, and gender are interwoven in the production of the “War on Women” but can also be strategically utilized by activists.

Faludi’s “undeclared war” was recently mainstreamed by the “War on Women,” which has become increasingly evident since 2011, particularly around abortion access. The Guttmacher Institute, which conducts a majority of the global research on reproductive and sexual health, reported that 2011 saw a record number of abortion restrictions driven by this neoliberal politic that denies the power of social systems and advocates personal accountability. In 2011 1,100 reproductive health and rights-related provisions were introduced in the U.S. and 68% restricted access to abortion through a variety of state-based regulations, including mandatory waiting periods, ultrasounds, and sharp reductions in family planning Medicaid funding (“States Enact Record Number of Abortion Restrictions in 2011”).

Concerns regarding the backlash on women’s reproductive rights were addressed in my interviews with feminist antimilitarist activists. In 2011 Krista, a Women in Black participant and Radical Cheerleader who has been active in the reproductive rights movement explained that
she sees a direct connection to these state cuts in funding to family planning services, like Planned Parenthood, to the militarized economy:

> It is so connected to global militarism, in that the money still exists, it is just being used to kill eighteen year olds and poor brown people, instead of providing reproductive health. The money is there, we have the completely untenable, unwarrantable, unsustainable wars and that because we continue to demand this access to the war machine the money has to come from somewhere. Some people are very concerned with women not having choices. I think that that has really given us this opportunity for the anti-choice movement to say it is about money, when really it is about limiting women's choices. And of course that is connected to larger discourses around who we see as people who can act, or have rights, or who we see as important.

This astute analysis ties together the theoretical and historical framework that I have laid out. It is also a common thread woven throughout the activist interviews I conducted in multiple communities. As Mag, a long time activist against nuclear proliferation and a Raging Granny of Denver, Colorado, stated, “Along came the Vietnam war, some of the people involved in the grape boycott were also concerned about the war because when you do these kind of actions, you notice the war drains everything else. It drains jobs, drains the economy, [and] drains education. Everything gets tied to war.” Echoing Woolf and Brown’s analysis of paying women instead of the military, Mag articulates the impact of war on our society.

Speaking to Kay, a Denver WiB activists, right after the passing of the Affordable Health Care for America Act of 2010 and the addition of the Stupak Amendment she connected the issue of creating community security through access to health care and the gendered impacts of the amendment:
If you don't have economic security and you look for scapegoats and then you conduct terrorist attacks and you go to war because you want to blame them or take over their resources. And the cost of healthcare is a big economic force; we spend 17% of our GDP on healthcare. But if you don't have access to healthcare and planning to control diseases which are easily preventable, you have difficulty holding a job, you have a hard time being financially secure and having time and energy to participate in the governance of your country. So it all fits together. . . [in regards to Stupak]. I regret the fact that the president and congress did not start at single payer and then negotiate that, instead they started in the middle first. That is where they went, and then we lost. There is less you want if you have less to give. You should start at a strong position on either end because the other side is going to win, then they got concessions like no federal dollars for abortions, you can't even buy a policy with it if there is any federal involvement or support that gives you reproductive rights or family planning.

While not every activist I met with discussed reproductive justice or health care access as tied to their anti-war politics, this theme was significant and is especially important within the neoliberal landscape and relinquishment of social funding. The economic context of neoliberalism has also shifted social movements from grassroots projects to corporatized political models. Such a “shift towards a politics of inclusion and incorporation rather than redistribution and transformation” drastically shapes the messages of movements and social demands (Spade 59). Undoubtedly, a reason the “War on Women” was so culturally prominent

\[21\] Dean Spade argues in favor of a “critical queer and trans political approach” to the neoliberal context, which mainstream LGBT politics have been incorporated into. He draws some very useful connections between the role of critical queer and trans politics as connected to the desires of feminist antimilitarists, specifically arguing for an elimination of the military budget in order to achieve economic justice.
was the exploitation of conservative female political subjectivities; however, ultimately pro-rape political rhetoric was unsuccessful. This is indicated in the reelection of President Obama and election of the most female candidates in history to Congress. The relinquishment of social welfare has racist and sexist impacts and therefore, must be central to the foundation of a successful peace movement. The following section points to how uniquely positioned the coalitional politics and messages of feminist activists are, as their methodologies point to an intelligibility that addresses local and global concerns, while also critiquing the economic and cultural priorities of militarization.

**Bring Our War $$ Home**

Code Pink’s “Bring Our War $$ Home” (BOWDH) campaign relies on a flexible mobilizing tactic to ensure that communities can link the costs of militarism to their daily needs, as nearly 60% of U.S. federal discretionary spending is on the military (“Cost of War”).\(^{22}\) BOWDH is a coalitional effort with localized peace movements, War Costs, the National Priorities Project, and New Priorities Network.\(^{23}\) The proposal of BOWDH is not a new one; as I laid out previously, it builds from antiracist critiques of U.S. imperialism and also follows organizations like Women’s Action for New Directions and WILPF, but it has been successful in that it has organized political leaders to adopt their redistribution platform in 2011 (“Mayors’ War Dollars…”). This section examines how this Code Pink campaign was transformed for the local politics of the Peace and Justice League of Spokane (PJALS). It speaks to the utility of a flexible activist framework, but also raises concerns about bridging local and global politics.

\(^{22}\) Code Pink’s organizing is discussed in further detail in Chapter Two.

\(^{23}\) See the National Priorities Network in order to calculate the cost of war’s impact on community resources: [http://nationalpriorities.org/interactive-data/trade-offs/](http://nationalpriorities.org/interactive-data/trade-offs/)
within neoliberal globalized militarism. PJALS’ evolving campaign of adopting an economic justice platform reveals how a community-based response to national politics is rooted in a vision of transnational solidarity.

The intent of the Code Pink BOWDH campaign, as indicated on their website, is to tie the military budget to the lives and global context by connecting U.S. struggles against austerity measures to that of Egypt’s demands for political democracy:

From Tunisia and Egypt, to Wisconsin and Ohio, let's bring our war dollars home!

Bombing Afghanistan, occupying Iraq, and maintaining more than 1,000 military bases around the globe costs billions a week, and aid to dictators like Mubarak costs U.S. taxpayers billions a year. Meanwhile domestic programs like heating assistance for low-income families, and public workers like firefighters and teachers, see their budgets slashed. People everywhere are rising up to demand money for jobs, housing and education, not for wars and occupation. And with fuel and food prices continuing to rise, these movements will continue to grow! (“Bring Our War $$ Home from Egypt to Wisconsin!”)

In 2011 Egypt and Tunisia saw uprisings demanding political democracy. Simultaneously Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker proposed stripping public unions, predominantly female laborers in education and nursing, of collective bargaining rights in order to balance the state budget. Mass demonstrations were held in Wisconsin, with Code Pink and WiB members in attendance. Many of the signs used during these events featured messages of solidarity with the people of Egypt. Using the National Priorities Project, for instance, Code Pink positions Wisconsin as a talking point for discussing economic priorities in relation to war, “150 soldiers coming home from Afghanistan this year would solve Wisconsin's budget shortfall – 150 out of
the approximately 80,000 currently stationed there” (“Bring Our War $$ Home from Egypt to Wisconsin!”). While the rhetoric risks reinscribing a universal experience between Egypt and Wisconsin instead of recognition of “scattered hegemonies,” it is laudable because it connects struggles, a point I will return to at the conclusion of this section.

PJALS began using the project in December 2010, and they originally called it the “Bring Our Billions Home” project, which members own analysis of activism prompted:

We did a member survey and the responses we got were so clear, people are members of PJALS because we have a very sophisticated analysis of the intersections, they were saying in one sentence, “because we are at war constantly there is no money for our communities. As the pie gets smaller the more resources we need and can't have” (Liz, PJALS).

Liz stated that they wanted to get people more involved and that she was concerned there were misconceptions that peace activist are radicals, hippies, or against soldiers. For these reasons she was very proud of their alliance with Veterans for Peace. One way that PJALS determined they could proliferate their message and make connections with people who were not previously engaged in peace and anti-war action was through a framework that interrogated the cost of war, which Liz articulated spoke to people’s “self-interests”:

I think if you want someone to take action it is usually out of self-interest. It is either a very narrow self-interest or more broad. I mean it is in my self-interest for my country to not be violent in the world. Even if the only reason I thought that was to not feel guilty about it, it is still in my self-interest to take action. First, we said the cost of war is too high. And some of our longtime members were like “hold the phone,” that is horribly offensive. We don't want a cheap war. We don't want war. So now we say the cost of war
is unacceptable. We used data from the National Priorities Project for information about how much your taxpayers are paying in your town for war for the last ten years, and here is what you could have done with that money. Here is how many kids could have had health care, etc. etc.

“Self-interest” in this response reflects the neoliberal rhetoric of individualism and the increased interpellation of citizens as consumers. Similarly, as the National Priorities Project asks “[c]ould your tax dollars be better spent?” This anti-war social cause is reoriented to assimilate within the framework of neoliberal economics and consumer “choice.” Framing taxpayers as the consumers of unjust wars in Iraq and Afghanistan instead of beneficial social programs does not drastically oppose the logics of war and profit. Rather, it curiously adopts the “self-interests” of the taxpayer (consumer) in order to increase support for anti-war movements in favor of alternative societal consumption (more socially just priorities than the military budget). Such marketized methods of resistance in neoliberalism are evidence of how privatized U.S. citizens’ emotions about wars have become. I have discussed in Chapter One the role of media in creating disarticulations in activists’ awareness of one another, but so too do the brutal realities of war create incommensurabilities of U.S. citizens with those impacted by war. While the BOWDH campaign is successful at calling out the exacerbation of class stratification through national economic priorities, a deeply critical approach to addressing global redistribution under neoliberal globalization and militarism is lacking.

A final point of analysis on the BOWDH case study and Willamette Brown’s proposed “pay women—not the military” within a transnational feminist network involves unpacking Code Pink’s statement in their rhetorical use of “home.” The “War on Women” is nationally bound to the U.S.; however, even those experiences are impacted by racial formations and class
access. Clearly the “War on Women” or “home” are not spaces that can bind all women together but rather might exist as a site to engage an alternative reality for social change. Complicating the politics of “home” allowed PJALS to formulate a more critical analysis of imperialism:

We had this banner made and we decided we wanted to have it say more than “Bring Our Billions Home”.... I actually met someone who said she would not sign onto the “Bring Our Billions Home” campaign because to her it said, “give no resources to anyone outside of our country.” It read like an America First. I mean there is nothing in it that counters that; it really is like give us our money. It is that line like, “Why are we building schools in Afghanistan if we could be building them here?” That is not the point. Everyone needs schools. Let’s just have the military quit building those schools! So we added this “Money for People, Not for War” to address this, and it won in consensus because it says people, not Americans. “Money for people, not war.” That is our first attempt to talk about imperialism, a little bit in a slogan.

The progression from “bring our money home” to “money for people” shows a conscientious effort to engage the difficult work of solidarity across national differences.

Code Pink and PJALS use of feminist antimilitarist organizing brought the questions about national economic priorities that arose during Vietnam anti-war and nuclear disarmament organizing into the current economic context. An analysis that engages the funding of national social programs includes racist, classist, and sexist intersections as marginalized communities are most impacted by access to education, health care, and shelter. It does not simply homogenize the experiences of all women within the U.S., one of Soto’s concerns with the parochial turn toward transnational feminism. Code Pink’s linking of international protests as one of shared struggle in the “From Egypt to Wisconsin” sentiment is useful for drawing parallels. However, it
runs the risk of overshadowing cultural, temporal, and historical divergences that connect these diversely different national struggles through colonial and imperial efforts. Evaluating the transnational analysis of Code Pink’s sentiment of “From Egypt to Wisconsin” must also take into account their attempt to counter colonial feminist approaches of the “liberator” and “victim” and that of the universalizing “global sisterhood” in some feminist formations (Morgan 1996).

“Counter Earth”: A Temporality of Struggle

Understanding feminist antimilitarism in a transnational context means both avoiding the racist colonial stances that see Third World/Global South women as uniquely oppressed and in need of First World liberation, and avoiding universalizing women’s experiences in a way that ignores the ways patriarchy works differently across national contexts. A critical analysis of the economy from a feminist perspective points to the roots of war as driven by power. This chapter builds from the recognition that resistant actions are sites of cultural production, something examined through the entirety of this dissertation project. What it has offered is a more nuanced analysis of binaries of the North/South and the local/global within the neoliberal context.

The national politics of the “War on Women” can’t be discussed as a universal experience of women in the U.S. or globally; however, understanding this “war’s” existence in relation to the context of contemporary feminist antimilitarism has shown that movements’ efforts grow to address the community based needs. Similarly, transnational feminism provides the useful tools engaging local and global differences without lapsing into simplistic universalism. As Narayan suggests:

What Western and Third-World feminists might hope to have in common may be other than “shared interest qua women” or “common forms of patriarchal oppression that cut
across national boundaries.” They may hope to have a shared and collaborative political understanding of colonial history, its continuing impacts on contemporary economic and political agendas within both Western and Third-World contexts, and its effects on the overall relationships between Western and Third-World nations and communities…. a “horizontal comradeship.” (Narayan 80)

It is not essentialist notions of oppression or sameness that will continue to make feminist antimilitarist communities successful; rather, it is a politics of critical engagement that will engender the solidarity necessary for speaking back to the imperialist endeavors of war and violence in our communities.

Mohanty’s critical demand for a “temporality of struggle” warns that as activists “we cannot afford to forget those alternative, resistant spaces occupied by oppositional histories and memories” (“Feminist Encounters” 468). The introductory cartoon “Counter Earth” offers us a glimpse at an alternative history, but it remains occupied with the cultural metaphor of militarism, much like the politics and economics of the United States. Connecting transnational feminist theories with the localized actions of PJALS, a “Counter Earth” with an alternative vision for the future becomes more viable. This vision puts people’s needs before a bloated military budget and refutes “individual accountability” in favor of community security on a global scale.
CONCLUSION/CONTINUATION

“We are silent, but we will not be silenced.”

–Julie, New York Public Library Women in Black

“Activism is central to who I am, [in order] to change things that are horrible in the world.”

–Hedy, New York Union Square Women in Black

“As a feminist I look at what my actions are … [and how they] impact this person on the other side of the world. I don't think people who are not feminists think like that.”

–Ava, Eau Claire, Wisconsin Students in Black

Feminist antimilitarists deploy powerful tools of struggle and social analysis. As Charlotte Bunch argues in her article “Not By Degrees: Feminist Theory and Education,” feminist theory and activism relate through “a continuous, spiraling process” (13). Her suggested framework for feminist analysis recognizes this dialectic relationship as one that endlessly alters and progresses the modes of social change through description, analysis, vision and strategy (Bunch 13-15). The actions I have explored throughout these chapters require a great deal of courage in the face of rising resistance to activism, and specifically feminist actions. These actions are not only illustrations of struggle, but also embodiments of feminist theory, as depicted above in the words of Women in Black members. These statements offer theoretical insights that move beyond description and into the politics of location, a main concern of transnational feminist analysis.

The actions I have explored throughout these pages offer a description of the gender injustices inherent in militarism and alternative visions to the current acceptance of militarism and neoliberal exploitation, and employ strategies that can change such realities. For instance, in
Chapter Four I have examined Code Pink and PJAL’s demands for a peace budget that puts people first. Specifically these actions point to the survival of resistance in the face of oppression and rapidly changing cultural and economic practices. While some actions have reproduced the discursive cultural formations of neoliberalism, for instance intergenerational disarticulation produced through the interpellation of media commercialization discussed in Chapter One and the implications of the “new momism” examined in Chapter Two these continued forms of activism illustrate the art of negotiation within the contested terrain of neoliberalism.

Sara Ahmed in “This Other and Other Others” theorizes how feminism may collectively struggle for a feminist ‘we’ while facing and becoming closer to “this other, and, with her, other others” (558). Ahmed articulates transnational feminism as “‘bringing together’ or ‘collecting’ together those who do not inhabit the same space or ground in the present” (560). Ava and Hedy’s above comments both articulate the desire that their actions connect them to the daily struggles of “other others.” Transnational activisms always exist for a future temporality, where social justice is realized. “Facing the other,” argues for close engagement with women whose differently positioned relations to neoliberal militarism and imperialism accepts difference for the basis of struggle. In fact, Ahmed suggests that collectivities are defined by/created through the work of acknowledging the existence of incommensurabilities and becoming closer to “this other and other others” (570). Forcing ourselves to become vulnerable to our differences and embracing the willingness to create a new future that is always attentive to past constructions and continuations of “otherness” are the ways feminist antimilitarist will be most successful in creating Bunch’s call to strategies of theorized action (14-15).
Considerations for Further Research: Occupying Consumer Spaces in Neoliberal Times?

There are further opportunities to build off of my research on neoliberalism’s relationship to activist methodologies. As capital has become increasingly mobile across borders within neoliberal globalization, the challenge that globalization poses to national sovereignty has also offered increased possibilities for transnational linkages of “other others.” This has been especially relevant in global movements for economic justice expressed in Arab Spring and Occupy Wall Street. Coalitions across differing struggles have also become increasingly transnational in consumer-based spaces.

Sarah Schulman’s experiences documented in Israel/Palestine and the Queer International points to coalition efforts between Palestinian liberation movements and LGBTQ organizers in the Boycott/Divestment/Sanctions (BDS) movement. This movement utilizes boycotting in order to politicize consumption through occupying the paradoxical space within “Marketized modes of resistance” (Banet-Weiser and Mukherjee 4). For this reason, I’m interested in furthering my critiques and analysis of “commodity activism” developed in Chapters One and Three to examine how sovereignty and imperialism, as theorized in the BDS movement, might be addressed through online-consumer models. The BDS Movement struggles to redress apartheid and the occupation of Palestine by boycotting to withdraw:

‘cooperation from an evil system,’ as Martin Luther King Jr. teaches us, BDS fundamentally calls on all peace-loving U.S. citizens to fulfill their profound moral obligation to desist from complicity in Israel’s system of oppression against the Palestinian people, which takes the form of occupation, colonization and apartheid. Given the billions of dollars lavished by the U.S. on Israel annually, American taxpayers are effectively subsidizing Israel’s human rights violations. (BDS Movement)
Schulman echoes this claim by calling upon a coalition with “queer internationalists,” which she defines as the modern day global anticapitalist movement anchored in an LGBT identity, because they “…are poised to be an organic part of a larger freedom vision [emphasis added], and we are almost ready to insist on reciprocity” (Schulman, *Israel/Palestine* 122). By revealing the potential collaboration between queer activism, economic justice, and Palestinian freedom the BDS movement, similar to that of Women in Black and Code Pink, is an applied action of intersectional theory.

Neoliberalism has undoubtedly reformed our revolutionary imaginations and mapped “social action onto merchandising practices, incentives, and corporate profits” (Banet-Weiser and Mukherjee 1). However, it has also exposed important economic territories, like consumer boycotting, as powerful tools to struggle against imperialism. Nothing is more prevalent in the growing anti-war movement than demanding anti-drone policies. One space this is evident is in the culture jamming tactics that have become popularized on the shopping space of Amazon.com. As one reviewer satirically remarks about a model drone toy:

I was beside myself when my son gave all his lunch money away to other kids who didn't have lunch. He was constantly expressing inappropriate feelings by hugging and holding hands with his classmates. Well, no more! I am happy to report that he is now grown into his role as an assertive, competitive, acquisitive, normal human being. (Tailwinds)

And another states the toy: “Helped me teach my son about the Imperial forces…[providing] hours of racist, imperialist fun” (Tailwinds). Both reviews interestingly point to gender and race as a space to examine militarization, thereby employing feminist antimilitarist analysis. The “occupation” of this consumer review space becomes one of political education by theorizing the role of gender, war, and imperialism.
As I discussed in the Introduction of this project, methods of social analysis require that we seek “voice” in new and creative ways. As Fujiwara insisted the “weaving” of texts and testimonies together offers researchers more complete understanding of voice under oppressive social existences (Thoma, “On Mothers Without Citizenship” 22). Culture jamming practices via these reviews is one such space that elaborates on theory and action within “commodity activism” while simultaneously speaking out against neoliberal militarism. While the BDS movement and growing resistance to drone use in the U.S. exist in divergent national contexts, they both exist to redress imperialism and racist violences while utilizing neoliberal frameworks. These growing movements would provide further sites for continued analysis of the historicized roots and contemporary actions against militarism.

Articulations of solidarity across national contexts in constantly evolving consumer spaces have the potential to create collective struggle for a visions of peace. As Black Laundry—an LGBT Israeli organization using WiB methods to expose the violence of the occupation of Palestine—states: “Our own oppression as lesbians, gays and trans-people enhances our solidarity with other oppressed groups” (Black Laundry qtd. in Schulman, Israel/Palestine 35). Similarly, Code Pink member and feminist scholar Alice Walker states, “We [Code Pink] understood that whatever we did to stop war, we did it not for the ‘other’ but for the collective us” (xiii). Dismantling militarism will not be negotiated by governments and institutions that uphold national and transnational economic and social injustices. It can and will only be enforced by people in pursuit of social justice. The linkage of feminist antimilitarist theory and action possesses the political tools for such revolutionary strategies.
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King, Martin Luther, Jr. “Beyond Vietnam.” Riverside Church, New York City. 4 April 1967. Speech.


APPENDIX A

CERTIFICATION OF EXEMPTION
MEMORANDUM

TO: Pamela Thoma and Mary Klinker,

FROM: Patrick Conner (for) Kris Miller, Chair, WSU Institutional Review Board (3005)

DATE: 7/2/2008

SUBJECT: Certification of Exemption, IRB Number 10455-001

Based on the Exemption Determination Application submitted for the study titled Women in Black: Transitional Feminist Resistance to Militarism, and assigned IRB # 10455, the WSU Institutional Review Board has determined that the study satisfies the criteria for Exempt Research contained in 45CFR 46.

Exempt certification does not relieve the investigator from the responsibility of providing continuing attention to protection of human subjects participating in the study and adherence to ethical standards for research involving human participants.

This certification is valid only for the study protocol as it was submitted to the IRB. Studies certified as Exempt are not subject to annual review. If any changes are made to the study protocol, you must submit the changes to the IRB for determination that the study remains Exempt before implementing the changes. Request for Amendment forms are available online at http://www.irb.wsu.edu/forms.asp.

In accordance with federal regulations, this Certification of Exemption and a copy of the study protocol identified by this certification must be kept by the principal investigator for THREE years following completion of the project.

It is important to note that certification of exemption is NOT approval by the IRB. The study materials should not include the statement that the WSU IRB has reviewed and approved the study for human subject participation. Please remove all statements of IRB Approval and contact information from study materials that will be disseminated to participants.

Washington State University is covered under Human Subjects Assurance Number FWA00002946 which is on file with the Office for Human Research Protections.

If you have questions, please contact the Institutional Review Board at (509) 335-3668. Any revised materials can be mailed to the Office of Research Assurances (Campus Zip 3005), faxed to (509) 335-6410, or in some cases by electronic mail, to irb@mail.wsu.edu.

Review Type: New Protocol
Review Category: Exempt
Date Received: 6/25/2008
Exemption Category: 45 CFR 46.101 (b)(2)
OGRD No.: N/A
Funding Agency:

Sincerely,

Patrick Conner
Office of Research Assurances
APPENDIX B
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
Interview Questions for Women in Black: Transnational Feminist Resistance to Militarism

Researcher: Mary Jo Klinker
Department of American Studies
Washington State University
Pullman, WA 99164-4007
mklinker@wsu.edu, 509 335 4387

Assigned pseudonym:

How would you describe your identity?

Tell me about what Women in Black is to you.

How long have you been/were you involved?

Why did you get involved?

Is it important that this is a woman-centered space? Why is that? How do you define woman? (OMIT)

What is the importance of having a silent vigil to you?

Does this allow you to connect with other women locally? Globally? (OMIT)

How does/Does your location in the U.S. change your perception of what Women in Black does?

Does your local Women in Black differ from other world-wide Women in Black?

Do you identify as a feminist? If so, how do you define it? How do these politics fuel your anti-war politics?

Extended Questions:
Are your WiB actions connected to communities in other locations? Nations? Does this connect you to other women?

Does parenting play a role in your anti-war stances? Elaborate your understanding of (motherhood).

In recent years, there has been an increase of women in the military. What is your response to this? Does that complicate how you understand women’s peace activism?

What does security mean to you?

What is your definition of empowerment?
Obama ran a campaign of ‘change,’ what changes have you seen?

With Hillary Clinton as Secretary of State should we expect changes in international relations?

What other political activism do you engage in? How is it connected or different from your WiB/anti-war stances?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTICIPANT'S PREFERRED NAME</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>ACTIVIST NETWORK AFFILIATIONS</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Kara”</td>
<td>Eau Claire, WI</td>
<td>Women in Black, Code Pink</td>
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<td>“Ava”</td>
<td>Eau Claire, WI</td>
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<td>“Maria”</td>
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<td>“Theresa”</td>
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<td>“Sally”</td>
<td>New York City, NY</td>
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<td>“Maureen”</td>
<td>Boulder, CO</td>
<td>Rocky Mountain Peace and Justice Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Krista”</td>
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<td>Women in Black, Radical Cheerleaders, Peace and Justice League of Spokane</td>
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<td>Pullman, WA</td>
<td>Palouse Peace Coalition, Code Pink, Peaceworks, The Rachel Corrie Foundation</td>
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