Lecture 4: Gender and Violence

1. Why Gender and Violence?

*Myriam Miedzian “Boys will be boys”*

“It is obvious that acts of violence are committed largely by men, but since we continue to take for granted that male is the norm, we remain unaware of it: we pay very little attention to this fact in our attempts to understand and deal with crime, war, or the threat of nuclear annihilation” (10)

*Cynthia Cockburn – “Gender as a Driving Force in War”*

“It’s because gender relations are what they are, because of the power and violence inherent in patriarchy, because a manly identity must have no truck with compromise, negotiation or acquiescence (necessary to peace, tainted with femininity) that we can say gender (as we live it) predisposes our societies to war, fosters militarization, denies peace a footing, and drives the continuum of war along.” (11)

“It’s a masculinity (and a complementary femininity) that not only serves militarism very well indeed, but (and this is my argument) it seeks and needs militarism and war for its fulfilment. It shuns compromise and concession (the effeminate language of peace).” (12)

2. Iris Marion Young

Masculine as protector:
- leads to ‘security state’ – characterized by demand for obedience, suspicion, militarism
- she has cynical worries about it, but more substantially, claims it undermines democracy, that democratic citizenship requires the rejection of the protector/protected relationship
  o to support this, she makes use of the feminist challenge that those in need of care ought not to be forced into position of subordination with diminished rights. We can accept that

*The logic of masculinism as protection:*
- chivalry – “real man” not selfish or dominating, but is loving and self-sacrificing, to shield others from harm
- requires image of the ‘bad’ men who want to invade territory and rape the women
- “The world out there is heartless and uncivilized, and the movements and motives of the men in it are unpredictable and difficult to discern. The protector must therefore take all precautions against these threats, remain watchful and suspicious, and be ready to fight and sacrifice for the sake of his loved ones[…]. Masculine protection is needed to make a home a haven” (4)
- requires subordinate position of the protected, in return woman concedes decision-making – in face of threat, cannot be divided wills
analogy with the state:
- citizens in democratic state are the protected (subordinate status)
- “security state” – “one whose rulers subordinate citizens to ad hoc surveillance, search, or detention and repress criticism of such arbitrary power, justifying such measures as within the prerogative of those authorities whose primary duty is to maintain security and protect the people” (8)

“Because they take the risks and organize the agency of the state, it is their prerogative to determine the objectives of protective action and their means. In a security state there is no room for separate and shared powers, nor for questioning and criticizing the protector’s decisions and orders. Good citizenship in a security regime consists of cooperative obedience for the sake of the safety of all” (9)

Problems

1) Protection Racket?
   - “… the woman without a male protector is fair game for any man to dominate. There is a bargain implicit in the masculinity protector role: either submit to my governance or all the bad men out there are liable to approach you, and I will not try to stop them” (14)

2) ‘Cheapens’ democracy
   - “Subordinate citizenship is not compatible with democracy.” (16)
   - relationship between citizens and state leaders should be one of equality (equal right and responsibility for policy judgments)

3) Feminist critique of care relationships
   - rights and dignity should not be diminished because people need care, care does not necessitate subordination and obedience to those who provide care

“… not only should they retain the rights of full citizens to choose their own way of life and hold authorities accountable but also they ought to be able to criticize the way in which support comes to them” (21)

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