

CURIOUS FEMINISM



THE APPROACH FROM CYNTHIA ENLOE'S BESTSELLER, THE CURIOUS FEMINIST, SUGGESTS THAT IF AN INDIVIDUAL WOULD LOOK AT THE STATE OF THE WORLD AND AT THE POSITIONS OF POWER AND SIMPLY INQUIRE „WHERE ARE THE WOMEN?”, THEY JUST MIGHT START TO GRASP THE VAST LAYERS AND SPACES CONQUERED BY MASCULINE PRIVILEGE. THE QUESTION „DAMPENS OUR CURIOSITY ABOUT WHERE WOMEN ARE AND WHERE MEN ARE, ABOUT WHO PUT WOMEN THERE AND MEN HERE, ABOUT WHO BENEFITS FROM WOMEN BEING THERE AND NOT SOMEPLACE ELSE, ABOUT WHAT WOMEN THEMSELVES THINK ABOUT BEING THERE AND WHAT THEY DO WITH THOSE THOUGHTS WHEN THEY TRY TO RELATE TO MEN AND TO OTHER WOMEN. ANY TIME WE DON'T PURSUE THESE QUESTIONS, WE ARE LIKELY TO MISS PATRIARCHY.”

MILITARISED MASCULINITIES IS A TERM THAT DESCRIBES THE GLORIFICATION OF VIOLENCE AS A MATTER OF PROTECTION AND HONOR. IT DEFINES “REAL MEN” AS EMOTIONALLY CONTROLLED, PHYSICALLY STRONG, AGGRESSIVE, AND DOMINANT OVER WOMEN AND NON-DOMINANT MEN, AND IT PRAISES LOYALTY TO THE NATION, THE MILITARY, AND HIERARCHY.

MILITARIES (AND MILITARISED SOCIETIES) RELY ON THESE IDEALS TO FUNCTION. ENLOE FURTHER EXPLAINS THAT THESE IDEALS ARE SOCIALLY CONSTRUCTED AND CONTINUOUSLY REINFORCED THROUGH NATIONALISM AND PATRIOTISM, THROUGH STEREOTYPICAL PORTRAYALS OF MASCULINITY IN MEDIA, FILMS, AND POLITICAL SPEECHES, INCLUDING EVERYDAY LANGUAGE.



MILITARISED MASCULINITIES

THIS DEFINITION OF MASCULINITY IS NOT LIMITED TO PROFESSIONAL SOLDIERS. MEN ACROSS SOCIETIES ARE ENCOURAGED TO HOLD THEMSELVES TO THESE STANDARDS FROM CHILDHOOD, PLAYING WITH MINIATURE GREEN FIGURINES, WHICH INTRODUCE WAR AS SOMETHING EXCITING, AS A POTENTIAL WAY TO WIN AND RECEIVE PRAISE IN THE WORLD, AND VIOLENCE AS SOMETHING NORMAL AND INEVITABLE. THIS NORMALIZATION PERSISTS EVEN IN AN AGE IN WHICH WE HAVE THE TOOLS AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS TO NEGOTIATE PEACE AND ENOUGH RESOURCES TO KEEP IT. MILITARISED MASCULINITIES SHAPE POLITICS, FOREIGN POLICY, AND INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, MAKING WAR APPEAR NECESSARY AND MASCULINE, WHILE WOMEN ARE CAST AS THOSE WHO NEED PROTECTION, WHO SUPPORT THE WAR EFFORT, OR WHO REMAIN INVISIBLE.

ENLOE'S KEY FEMINIST MOVE IS TO ASK:
WHO BENEFITS WHEN MASCULINITY IS TIED TO MILITARISM,
AND WHOSE LABOR AND SILENCE MAKE IT POSSIBLE?