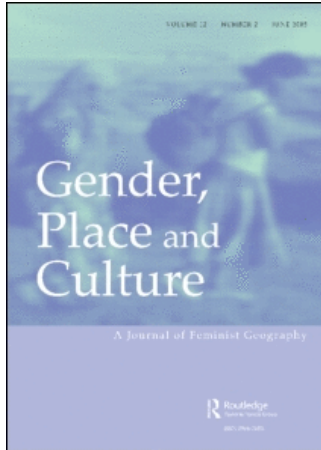


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US Empire and the Project of Women's Studies: Stories of citizenship, complicity and dissent

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ABSTRACT *This essay charts some of the most urgent challenges feminists confront in relation to imperialism, militarization, and corporate globalization in the USA. It insists on the necessity of feminist anti-imperialist praxis, specifically in the context of the academic and non-academic projects engendered by Women's Studies scholarship and teaching in North America. An analysis of the Abu Ghraib events illustrates the deeply gendered, racial, and sexualized national practices of US military culture and the Bush/Cheney war state. The essay calls for feminist engagement with a US imperial (not just democratic in promissory terms) state by connecting domestic with foreign policy issues. Suggesting that the US academy is profoundly implicated in the current project of empire, the essay further analyzes the place of Women's Studies and its history of contested citizenship projects as a crucial site of feminist anti-imperialist praxis. It seeks to make an important distinction between feminist practice that is complicit in the project of empire, and radical, anti-imperialist feminisms anchored in a politics of dissent.*

Our strategy should be not only to confront empire, but to lay siege to it. To deprive it of oxygen. To shame it. To mock it. With our art, our music, our literature, our stubbornness, our joy, our brilliance, our sheer relentlessness—and our ability to tell our own stories. Stories that are different from the ones we're being brainwashed to believe.

The corporate revolution will collapse if we refuse to buy what they are selling—their ideas, their version of history, their wars, their weapons, their notion of inevitability.

Remember this: We be many and they be few. They need us more than we need them. Another world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing. (Arundhati Roy, January 2003, World Social Forum, Porto Alegre, Brazil)

I began thinking of questions of empire, anti-imperialist feminism and citizenship some years ago when the adoption of my daughter Uma necessitated my becoming a US citizen. Given that questions of identity, location and accountability have always haunted my work on transnational justice and solidarity, it was

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entirely logical that my becoming a US citizen at a time of militarized war and US empire-building meant that my shift from immigrant to citizen could not be an innocent one. I had to examine this 'new' status, to ask what it means for an immigrant woman of color turned US citizen to engage in transnational feminist politics at a time when some of 'my' peoples are seen as non-citizens and threats to the US nation. This essay constitutes my reflections on these difficult shifts, and the questions and explorations they make possible. My project of transnational feminist solidarity remains central to these new efforts to examine race, empire, and citizenship in US feminist and Women's Studies projects.

In a May 2003 interview the writer and activist Arundhati Roy identifies the checkbook and the cruise missile as the tools of corporate led globalization. If the checkbook (read economic control) doesn't work, as in Argentina, then the cruise missile will—as in Iraq (Barsamian, 2004): an apt description of unilateral, corporatist, US empire. This combination of economic control and physical violence and destruction has a centuries old legacy of colonialism and imperialism. In 2006, however, it is important to specify how the colonial traffics in the imperial. Post-cold war, and post-1989, we enter an era of accelerated forms of corporate and militarized rule, with the US emerging as the lead bully on the block, ably assisted of course by the UK. If, as a rather incisive 1942 *Fortune* magazine editorial claimed, the representatives of the British empire were 'salesmen and planters', and of the post-WWII American empire were 'brains and Bulldozers, technicians and machine tools',¹ the current representatives of US empire may be corporate executives and military and security personnel—those who wield the checkbook and the cruise missile. Each of these groups of imperial actors—the salesmen and planters, the brains and technicians, and the executives and military/security personnel tell very particular stories—not just of political economy and territorial control but also of the gender and color of empire, of racialized patriarchies and heteronormative sexualities of empire at different historical junctures. These stories (and others like them) necessitate mapping a landscape where corporate cultures of power, domination and surveillance coincide with a politics of complicity in the academy and elsewhere.

One way to address the politics of complicity is to analyze the languages of imperialism and empire deployed explicitly by the US State, and sometimes adopted uncritically by progressive scholars and activists alike. In a provocative essay called 'Imperial Language', Marilyn Young argues that the languages of imperialism and empire are distinct, even contradictory (Young, 2005). She distinguishes between the language of empire and the language of imperialism whereby the former is 'benign, nurturing, polysyllabic', and the latter, the language of 'the act of creating and sustaining empire. . . immediate. direct, often monosyllabic'. She goes on to claim that at this time both languages dovetail in the recreation of an Anglo-American 'colonizing, warrior past' (p. 40)—a clear instance then of the colonial trafficking in the imperial. What role have US feminists who supported the Bush administration's war in the name of 'rescuing' Afghan and Iraqi women played in this narrative of empire and imperialism? This is one of the questions we need to pose to address the politics of complicity and dissent within contemporary feminist projects.

This essay maps my understanding of some of the most urgent challenges feminists confront in relation to imperialism, militarization and corporate globalization in the USA. It outlines the possibilities for feminist anti-imperialist praxis, specifically in terms of the genealogies of academic and non-academic

projects engendered by US feminist politics and by Women's Studies. What I am suggesting is not necessarily new. Two recent books by Zillah Eisenstein (2004) and Cynthia Enloe (2004) offer excellent analyses of the intellectual and political stakes for feminists confronting empire. The argument I am making here is very simple: imperialism, militarization, and globalization all traffic in women's bodies, women's labor, and ideologies of masculinity/femininity, heteronormativity, racism, and nationalism to consolidate and reproduce power and domination. Thus, it is anti-racist, anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist, multiply gendered feminist praxis that can provide the ground for dismantling empire and re-envisioning just, humane and secure homespaces for marginalized communities globally.

A number of scholars including Leo Panitch and Sam Gindin (2004) conclude that since the last decades of the twentieth century, the US rules through the mechanisms of 'informal empire' managing the flow of corporate capital globally across and through the borders of nation/states, as well as through military interventions in countries that resist this form of capitalist globalization.² However, I would argue that these mechanisms of informal and not violently visible empire building are predicated on deeply gendered, sexualized, and racial ideologies that justify and consolidate the hypernationalism, hypermasculinity, and neo-liberal discourses of 'capitalist democracy' bringing freedom to oppressed third world peoples—especially to third world women. The US war state mobilizes gender and race hierarchies and nationalist xenophobia in its declaration of internal and external enemies, in its construction and consolidation of the 'homeland security' regime, and in its use of the checkbook and cruise missile to protect its own economic and territorial interests. It mobilizes both languages of empire and imperialism to consolidate a militarized regime internally as well as outside its territorial borders.

Bringing 'democracy' and 'freedom' (or more precisely the free market) to Afghanistan and Iraq most recently, then, has involved economic devastation, de-masculinization, destruction of cultural, historical, natural and environmental resources, and, of course, indiscriminate massacres in both countries. Similarly, 'making the homeland safe' has involved the militarization of daily life, increased surveillance and detention of immigrants, and a culture of authoritarianism fundamentally at odds with American liberal democratic ideals. If the larger, overarching project of the US capitalist state is the production of citizens for empire, then the citizens for democracy narrative no longer holds. Where US liberal democratic discourse posed questions about democracy, equality, and autonomy (the American dream realized), neo-liberal, militarist discourse poses questions about the free market, global opportunity, and the protection of US interests inside and outside its national borders. Capitalist imperialism is now militarist imperialism. Capitalist globalization is militarized globalization.

The rest of this essay reviews the form and operation of the US imperial state and develops an anti-imperialist feminist framework, analyzing the Abu Ghraib incidents to illustrate the deeply gendered, racial, and sexual workings of US military culture and the Bush/Cheney war state. It moves on to an analysis of the genealogies of race, nation, and citizenship in US Women's Studies as an elaboration of feminist anti-imperialist praxis. Drawing on an insightful analysis of discourses of race, nation and moral identity in Canadian feminist organizations by Sarita Srivastava, I pose an analogous question in relation to US feminist knowledge projects. Srivastava (2005, p. 34) defines the Canadian

national self-image as one of tolerance and non-racism, suggesting that 'Specific to Western second-wave organizations are the ways that these historical and gendered representations of racial innocence and superiority come together with two other threads: feminist ideals of tolerance, benevolence, and nonracism'. If the Canadian self-image is one of tolerance and nonracism, the US self-image is that of a benevolent, 'civilized' white paternal nation bringing democracy to rest of the world. While the US has always defined itself as a multicultural 'nation of immigrants', the race and color of immigrants always mattered. In this context, then, what role do second wave US white feminist projects play in encoding and reproducing these stories of the nation?

On 'Democracy' and Empire: Genealogies of the US State

In an earlier essay charting the colonial legacies and imperial practices of the late twentieth century US State, Jacqui Alexander and I (1997) argued that the US State facilitates the transnational movement of capital within its own borders as well as internationally. We referred to the US State as an 'advanced capitalist' state with an explicit imperial project, engaged in practices of re-colonization, prompting the reconfiguration of economic, political, and militarized relationships globally. We argued that postcolonial and advanced capitalist states had specific features in common. They own the means of organized violence, which is often deployed in the service of national security. Thus, for instance, the USA Patriot Act is mirrored by similar post-9/11 laws in Japan and India. Second, the militarization of postcolonial and advanced capitalist states essentially means the re-masculinization of the state apparatus, and of daily life. Third, nation-states invent and solidify practices of racialization and sexualization of their peoples, disciplining and mobilizing the bodies of women, especially poor and third world women, as a way of consolidating patriarchal and colonizing processes. Thus the transformation of 'private' to 'public' patriarchies in multinational factories, and the rise of the international 'maid trade', the sex tourism industry, global militarized prostitution, and so on. Finally, nation-states deploy heterosexual citizenship through legal and other means. Witness the US 'don't ask, don't tell'/gays in the military debate in the Clinton years, and decade-long national struggles over the Defense of Marriage Act of 1993, as well as similar debates about sexuality and criminalization in the Bahamas and Trinidad and Tobago.³ The deployment of race, gender, sexuality, and class in the internal and external disciplining of particular groups evident in the Bush/Cheney war state necessitates looking at these analytic and experiential categories simultaneously, and, since 9/11, the acceleration of the project of US empire necessitates developing a feminist anti-imperialist frame. US feminists have always engaged the US nation-state, but it was always the 'democratic' nation-state that merited such attention—not the 'imperialist' US State. Feminist engagement in the latter context requires making the project of empire visible in the gendered and sexualized state practices of the US, looking simultaneously at the restructuring of US foreign and domestic policy. It also requires an explicit analysis of the complicities and potentially imperialist complicities of US feminism. And it requires examining feminism's own alternative citizenship projects in relation to racialized stories of the nation, of home and belonging, insiders and outsiders.

Both US foreign policy and domestic policy at this time are corporate and military driven. Both have led to the militarization of daily life around the world

and in the US—specifically for immigrants, refugees, and people of color—and militarization inevitably means mobilizing practices of masculinization and heterosexualization.⁴ Both can be understood through a critique of the racialized and gendered logic of a civilizational narrative mobilized to create and recreate insiders and outsiders in the project of empire building. Thus, for instance, as Miriam Cooke (2002) argues, 'saving' brown women in Afghanistan justifies US imperial aggression (the rescue mission of civilizing powers), just as the increased militarization of domestic law enforcement, the border patrol, and the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) (now renamed the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration) can be justified in the name of a War on Drugs, a War on Poverty, and now a War on Terrorism.

The clearest effects of US empire building in the domestic arena are thus evident in the way citizenship has been restructured, civil rights violated and borders re-policed since the commencement of the war of drugs, and now the war on terrorism and the establishment of the homeland security regime. While the US imperial project calls for civilizing brown and black (and now Arab) men and rescuing their women outside its borders, the very same state engages in killing, imprisoning, and criminalizing black and brown and now Muslim and Arab peoples within its own borders. Former political prisoner Linda Evans (2005) calls the US a 'global police state' one that has adopted a mass incarceration strategy of social control since the Reagan years. Analyzing the militarization of US society, Evans argues that the new definition of 'domestic terrorism' heralds the *now legal* return of the Counter Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO) that conducted illegal covert operations in the 1960s and 1970s against the Black Panther party, the American Indian movement, the Puerto Rican Independence movement, and left/socialist organizations. Racial profiling, once illegal, is now legitimated as public policy, including a requirement that Arab and Muslim men from over 25 countries register and submit to INS interrogation. Similarly, Julia Sudbury analyzes the global crisis and rise in the mass incarceration of women, suggesting that we must be attentive to 'the ways in which punishment regimes are shaped by global capitalism, dominant and subordinate patriarchies and neocolonial, racialized ideologies' (see Sudbury, 2005, p. xiii).

This prison industrial complex is supported by the militarization of domestic law enforcement. As Anannya Bhattacharjee (2002) suggests, there have been dramatic increases in funding, increasing use of advanced military technology, sharing of personnel and equipment with the military, and the general promotion of a war-like culture in domestic law enforcement and also in a range of public agencies (welfare, schools, hospitals—and now universities?) that are subjected to an accelerated culture of surveillance and law enforcement (see Silliman & Bhattacharjee, 2002). The effects of these conjoined economic/military policies of the US imperial state represents an alarming increase of violence against women, children and communities bearing the brunt of US military dominance around the world. In the US, policies clearly target poor and immigrant communities. In her new work, Jacqui Alexander (2005) analyzes the primacy of processes of heterosexualization in the consolidation of empire. She suggests that the mobilization of the loyal heterosexual citizen patriot is achieved through the collapse of constructions of the enemy, the terrorist and the sexual pervert. Similarly, Jasbir Puar and Amit Rai (2002) analyze the 'terrorism' industry since 9/11, exploring the production of the monster, the fag, and the terrorist as figures of surveillance and criminalization. This clearly gendered, sexualized, and

racialized culture of militarism and surveillance is buttressed by a hegemonic culture of consumption and neo-liberal conservatism wherein discourses of advancement and technological superiority, anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim sentiments dovetail with ideologies of patriotism, and faith-based initiatives and ideologies to justify the war at home and the war abroad. Take Abu Ghraib for instance.

Zillah Eisenstein (in progress) claims that Abu Ghraib is 'hypermasculinity run amok. Females are present to cover over the misogyny of building empire'. Racialized, gendered and sexualized relations of torture, triumphant power, and voyeurism weave explicitly through the images of Abu Ghraib. White women dominate the rape and abuse of brown men. Brown women are all but invisible. White American women are responsible and accountable—they are collaborators, buttressing the project of racist, masculinist empire. They are also gender decoys (Eisenstein, in progress) in uniform, leaving masculinized/racialized gender in place, and furthering the building of empire.

Bob Wing (2004) analyzes the color of Abu Ghraib, focusing on the war on terrorism as a racial and religious war, a crusade of the 'civilized' against the 'uncivilized'. He draws on the historical continuities and similarities of the war abroad and the war at home to make his argument. Muslims demonized as blood-thirsty terrorists just as Native peoples were demonized as savages out to scalp white settlers. Both groups of men need civilizing—and, of course, Christian salvation. The sexual humiliation of Iraqis recalls the rape of black slaves—the triumphant smiling perpetrators recall the trophy photos of the lynching of black men. The random jailing of 3000 Iraqis is continuous with the incarceration of black men in the US—more black men in prison than college graduates. Finally, Wing (2004) points to the similarities between the mass roundup and detention of Arabs and Muslims and the internment of Japanese Americans as enemy aliens during WWII. All stories of racialized masculinity and heteronormative imperial power—all stories of the US nation trafficking and recycling colonizing practices. Linda Burnham (2004) claims the Abu Ghraib photos reveal as much about the nation as about the particular company of soldiers—the 372nd. They reveal the sexualization of national conquest and the sexual sacrifice of some portion of the population of the conquered nation—usually women and always poor women.

The militarized US State and its imperial projects are thus a crucial site of feminist struggle both in terms of the violence and urgency of the struggles themselves, but also in terms of the potential interventions feminists could make to unsettle these particular stories and practices of the US nation/state and thus pave the way for transnational anti-imperialist solidarities. In this context there are numerous institutional practices and their effects that feminist scholars could examine. These include detailed analysis of the contradictions of national security/homeland security, the USA Patriot Act of 2001 and 2002, and the corporate/military nexus in the academy. It is to this last site that I turn now to explore stories of the nation and of citizenship in Women's Studies projects, as a way to engage in feminist anti-imperialist praxis. The question I want to ask concerns the place of Women's Studies in the academy—an academy that is corporatized, militarized, and deeply contradictory in terms of its citizenship projects. The above discussion suggests that stories of citizenship and belonging are central to the consolidation of empire. Let us now turn to a discussion of the US academy, and a provisional cartography of three decades of Women's Studies

in relation to this analysis of the US imperial state and questions of citizenship. For the purposes of this discussion I define citizenship as that particular form of belonging to the nation/state that is based on rights, participation and obligations and anchored in historical geographies of racial and cultural identities.

On US Feminism and the Project of Women's Studies: Genealogies of nation and citizenship

US empire in 2005 works through processes of militarization and economic globalization managed by a hypernationalist state, assisted by multinational corporations, transnational governing bodies like the World Bank and the IMF, corporate media, law enforcement/criminal justice policies, the prison industrial complex, the intelligence and national security apparatus, and last but not least, by the US academy.

Over 15 years ago, Jonathan Feldman, Noam Chomsky and others analyzed the role of the academy in what was then referred to as the military industrial complex (see Feldman, 1989 and Burnham, 2004). In 2005, the academy continues to figure prominently in the consolidation of empire and the operation of the national security state. Most visibly, it aids in the surveillance and policing functions of the state via the USA Patriot Act of 2001 which calls for international students, scholars and their dependants on F and J visas to be registered on SEVIS, a web-based data collection and monitoring system created to link the academy to the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration (aka the INS), consulates and embassies abroad, ports of entry into the US, and other state agencies. The intimate connections between scientific knowledge, corporate power, and profit have now been examined by many scholars. In earlier work, I analyzed the corporate academy and questions of citizenship (Mohanty, 2003a). I argued then for an anti-capitalist feminist project that examines the political economy of higher education, defining the effects of globalization on the academy as a process that combines market ideology with a set of material practices drawn from the business world. I still believe this is a crucial and urgent project for feminist educators, but now I want to complicate it further by urging us to look at how the corporate academy aids and abets the building of empire—its involvement in the project of US empire, and most particularly I want to reflect on how Women's Studies and its epistemic and political genealogies figure in this project.

The social organization of knowledge in the academy, its structures of inquiry, and discipline based pedagogies are inevitably connected to larger state and national projects, and engender their own complicities as well as practices of dissent. Just as privatized academies engender capitalist, market based citizenship, they also encode stories of the US nation—a presumably 'democratic' nation that is simultaneously involved in the project of empire building. Thus one important aspect of anti-imperialist feminist work is the analysis of stories of the nation and of citizenship in US feminist politics as well as in the project of Women's Studies.

The strength of Women's Studies was always that it was 'in' and 'of' the world and that it envisioned democratic/socialist praxis and addressed questions of social and economic justice. How is US Women's Studies in and of the world today? How does it conceive of this world? And what challenges lie ahead to make it true to its emancipatory vision? Numerous scholars have analyzed the significance of the category of the political to feminist scholarship and teaching.

Mari Jo Buhle's (2000) claim that US Women's Studies emerged out of twentieth century social movements is echoed by Marilyn Boxer's (1998) analysis of the significance of a political and social transformation agenda to the knowledge projects of Women's Studies. Ellen Messer-Davidow (2002) argues that the institutionalization of feminism has led to its domestication in the academy, and to a loss of its political edge. Whether we agree with Messer-Davidow's analysis or not, it does point once more to the significance of the category of the political.⁵

Clearly there are multiple Women's Studies projects in the US, but it may be possible to identify a potential convergence of effects around questions of nation, nationalism, and citizenship (one important way of addressing the political) in this field. I suggest that the national 'subject' of US Women's Studies remains by and large under-theorized. Normative understandings of citizenship are still domestically bound in an age when the US nation-state is patently imperial. If Women's Studies and feminist scholars were to ask what it means to be a gendered/racialized citizen of an imperial nation, what kinds of questions of citizenship would need to emerge?

If the racialized, gendered, heterosexual figure of the citizen patriot, the risky immigrant, the sexualized and de-masculinized external enemy and potential domestic terrorist are all narratives and state practices mobilized in the service of empire, an appropriate question to ask is whether and how the academy, and academic disciplines (specifically Women's Studies) are involved in contesting or buttressing these practices. For instance, sociology is implicated in the punishment industry and the increased criminalization of daily life, geography has investments in mapping of 'others' (not least through technologies such as GPS (Global Positioning System)), normative economics continues to explain immigration and capitalism in terms that erase the historical inequities and violence involved in both, normative political science has investments in a value-neutral democratic state, and new disciplines like National Security Studies create the very state managers that an imperial war state needs. And many of us in Women's Studies have multiple homes in these departments.⁶ Let us also not forget the explicit militarized, imperial project of the 'School for the Americas'.

How do we analyze fields like Women's Studies, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT)/Queer Studies, Race and Ethnic Studies, and Postcolonial Studies in terms of the social organization of knowledge and relation to nation and empire building in the USA? I argue that one way to approach this question is by analyzing the latent or overt citizenship projects (and thus, narratives of nation and nationalism) embedded in these knowledge projects. That these fields have contradictions, and have functioned through a simultaneous politics of accommodation and dissent is evident. That they have all experienced a backlash with the growing power of conservatism, neo-liberalism and hypernationalism in the academy is also evident. The 1980s demonizing of multiculturalism and feminism via the organized assault by the New Right in the name of political correctness is not very different from the post-9/11 scapegoating of area studies and postcolonial studies as 'unpatriotic' and anti-American. There are of course numerous differences as well as parallels between Women's Studies, LGBT/Queer Studies, Race/Ethnic/Third World and Postcolonial Studies and their location in the academy. We can point to histories of activism, theorization of experience and identity from marginalized social locations, commitment to economic and social justice, links to counter-hegemonic social movements, contested institutional locations and histories, and so on.

But perhaps another very important commonality is the commitment to a contested (perhaps even counter-hegemonic?) citizenship project—a project that lays bare the operation of state power and its effects on gendered/racialized bodies and communities around the world. A project that envisions citizenship in ways that challenge the normative construction of the white, male, heterosexual citizen-patriot. And perhaps it is this project that is at stake now as we confront empire. How do we in Women's Studies, and elsewhere craft a citizenship project that does not further the imperatives of empire? In other words, how do we theorize, analyze, and *not* reproduce the 'US nation' (and US empire) in the epistemological and political work we undertake in our markedly alternative fields? Failure to critique US empire allows feminist projects to be used and mobilized as handmaidens in the imperial project.⁷

Let us explore this question of a contested citizenship project in Women's Studies. By a contested citizenship project I refer to a project wherein multiply gendered citizenship becomes one of the vectors that are analyzed and engaged as a primary site of struggle. An analytic question then might be: What does it mean to be a fully empowered differentiated citizen in the academy, community, nation, and world? Women's Studies and feminist literacy consists of research, teaching, and organizing around this project. We theorize, think through, and work with people who will be the kind of citizen we want to engender. This suggests theorizing transnational and anti-capitalist citizenship for women across class, race, sexualities, nations, and it means rethinking America and its many truncated forms of citizenship, especially the collapsing of consumerism into citizenship. It also means taking on the genealogy of second wave white feminisms not in just in terms of its history of race and racism but also in terms of its genealogies of nationalism.

The question of nation and the place of North America has been central to Women's Studies in the USA since its inception and institutionalized formation in the early 1970s. While feminist scholarship has been attentive to questions of the intersectionality of gender, race, class and sexuality, the category of the nation has been relatively under-theorized in feminist work on the USA. However, just as US feminist scholarship and praxis has always been racialized and gendered, it has also always encoded stories of North America as central to its knowledge production. In fact it is in times of crisis—in times of war—that these stories of the nation get mobilized, and are therefore patently visible for all to see. The most recent debates in Women's Studies around feminism and the war suggest feminist complicities as well as dissent in relation to the project of empire. Similarly feminist anti-globalization work also poses questions of nation and citizenship.

Second wave US feminism has encoded and appealed to the US nation-state in various ways. The question of subjectivity and agency (moral and otherwise) suggests ways to understand this. Identifying which groups of women occupy center-stage over the decades in relation to the question of agency provides one way of understanding citizenship in Women's Studies. What subjects can call on the nation for recognition and participation? And what entitlements can be drawn on in terms of this hailing of the nation? The entire racist history of white women's enfranchisement since the first wave of US feminism testifies to yet another way in which the colonial traffics in the imperial. Thus, for instance, following Srivastava's (2005) analysis, are white women defined not just as racially superior in the colonial history of the USA, but also as innocent and morally superior markers of the 'multicultural' and 'civilized' American nation/state? And how

are gendered stories of the race and nation encoded and reproduced in genealogies of US white feminism?⁸ The benevolent maternalism of early twentieth century white feminists is echoed in the paternalism of the Feminist Majority in their rescue mission to save women in Afghanistan (see RAWA, 2001). Some important questions in this regard include asking in whose name feminist movements have been mobilized, and the field of Women's Studies established; who occupies the moral center in projects of social transformation and what kinds of feminist moral identities get mobilized, and how all this relates to citizenship defined in terms of the ethics of participation and redistribution.

The genealogy sketched above is a very partial one—but it brings the analytic and political strands regarding citizenship within the discipline into sharper focus.⁹ The 1970s epistemic and political project of Women's Studies was anchored in social movements and activism—the first academic courses and programs emerged as a result of struggle inside and outside the academy. Women's Studies was in and of the world in potentially insurgent ways at that time, centralizing a narrative of Euro-American challenges to masculinist heterosexist constructions of knowledge. The 'nation' for the most part was an unproblematic democratic, domestically bounded USA, and citizenship was assumed to be the purview of white, privileged males. Thus the largely unstated citizenship project of Women's Studies (WS) then was on behalf of Euro-American, middle-class women. Since the 1970s, feminists have been aware of the contradiction of critiquing the state while simultaneously calling on it for rights and gender justice. Conceptions of rights, of subjectivity, and of justice all entail notions of protectionism (often in the name of security). And ideas of protection by the nation-state can involve feminist collusion in the imperial project of the nation.

The 1980s saw the rise of epistemic challenges to hegemonic discourses of Euro-American womanhood from US women of color, poor women and lesbians. Critiques of racism and heterosexism in Women's Studies took center-stage. This was the time of the consolidation of race and ethnic studies and of Women's Studies in the academy—a period of building as well as backlash. The citizenship project and stories of the nation became more complicated along race, class, and sexual dimensions. The narrative of a democratic US nation no longer held since the visibility of poor white women, women of color, and lesbians destabilized the image of democratic citizenship. After all, we the people have always had multiply raced, gendered and sexualized bodies. Using Ruth Lister's (2003) analysis, the 1970s and 1980s marked the transition in feminist understandings of citizenship from gender neutral (non-relevance of gender to equal rights and obligations) and gender differentiated (transforming conceptions of citizenship to accommodate the experience of women) paradigms to gender pluralist (citizenship based on multiple identities and subject positions) ones.

The 1990s marked the entry of anti-globalization and transnational feminisms via the history of the UN conferences on women, the rise of NGOs, the entry of a generation of post-colonial/third world, immigrant scholars into US Women's Studies, feminist disability studies, the rise of transgendered movements and the questioning of sex and gender as stable organizing categories for feminist praxis. Now the question of the gendered, racialized nation and of citizenship is re-centered. Histories of US imperialism, colonization, and of women's complicity begin to surface, as Women's Studies moves to 'internationalize' the curriculum. In earlier work I marked the rise of the feminist-as-tourist, and feminist-as-explorer

curricular models of internationalizing Women's Studies—and advocated what I call a feminist solidarity model. This model focuses on mutuality and common interests across borders, on understanding the historical and experiential particularities and differences as well as the connections between women's lives around the world, and on the connection and division between forms of women's activism and organizing across racial, national, sexual borders (Mohanty, 2003b).

However, the narrative above is partial since an aspect of each of these nation/citizenship projects was present throughout these decades of Women's Studies, just as *all* of us, white, brown, black, LGBT, immigrant, poor, disabled women were present and active throughout the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. This is a landscape of hegemonic (albeit contested) citizenship narratives in Women's Studies. So where does that leave us in 2006? What are the challenges for Women's Studies in terms of nation, empire and gender now? If the 1970s Women's Studies signaled Euro-American citizenship, the 1980s moved towards a multiracial, sexualized understanding of citizenship, and the 1990s drew attention to the nationalist and heterosexist constructs of citizenship, albeit in often problematic ways, in 2006 the citizenship project remains contested for Women's Studies, if we are to see ourselves once again as in and of the world in non-imperialist ways. And it is the hypernationalist, racist, heteronormative corporate US empire that needs to be confronted. Given the trafficking in women's bodies, and the use of women to humanize the war, challenging empire, and its racist, heterosexist ideologies must become a part of the future of Women's Studies and of feminist praxis. Gender pluralist understandings of citizenship only take us so far—at this time it is anti-imperialist forms of citizenship that are needed to construct solidarities across the borders of the US nation-state. It is this cross-border, transnational feminist understanding that makes alliances and solidarities possible. Thus, drawing on the earlier discussion of the need for an anti-imperialist feminist framework that theorizes the connections between domestic and foreign policy, between inside and outside the borders of the USA, I suggest that similar transnational understandings of citizenship become necessary if US Women's Studies is to take its own political and epistemological genealogies seriously. Theorizing the place of immigrant, poor women of color in the citizenship narrative of Women's Studies, and challenging the rescue narrative of privileged US feminists wherever it appears is a crucial aspect of feminist solidarity praxis at this time.

This counter-hegemonic project entails asking questions like: Who or what is Women's Studies loyal to? How are questions of patriotism and dissent experienced, theorized, and taught in WS? How do the culture of racist hypernationalism and the corporatized academic location of Women's Studies influence our epistemic and political projects? Envisioning and enacting an emancipatory decolonized citizenship project based on creating democratic cultures of dissent is a difficult task at a time when the imperatives of a war economy over-ride the most basic democratic freedoms. So feminists have some profound challenges ahead, not just in terms of mapping the relations of rule of empire and capitalist globalization—wherever we are located—but also in terms of generating adequate responses that disrupt business as usual and transform the hypermasculine, militarist cultures women now inhabit in many corners of the globe. Feminist practice at many levels (daily life, collective movements and organizing, knowledge production, etc.) needs to do the necessary work that disrupts and does *not* reproduce the terms of domination.

Some practical suggestions include: acknowledging the centrality of empire in our lives and communities; analyzing the operation and effects of empire using anti-racist, anti-capitalist non-heteronormative feminist lenses, specifically in the terms of the convergence of race and nation in the citizenship projects of women's studies; looking at particular institutions of imperial rule, communities at risk, sites of resistance and understanding their role in contesting or bolstering empire; connecting our analysis to the politics of movements—making feminist analysis dangerous to empire—engaging in dissent based on careful analysis; being present and visible as feminists in anti-war, anti-globalization, prison abolitionist, pro-worker, immigrant, queer and disability rights movements; distinguishing between imperial or colonizing feminisms and anti-imperialist feminisms. Finally, it means believing another world is possible and acting on it!

To conclude, this analysis of contested citizenship and stories of the nation in US feminism engages the project of US empire by identifying the racist and nationalist traces within genealogies of Women's Studies. It facilitates the possibilities of transnational solidarities across borders in specifically academic spaces. Clearly such solidarities have always been part of transnational feminist praxis—however, they have not always been centralized in US feminist academic contexts. Examining the narratives of the US nation and genealogies of citizenship as the landscape for anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist work is a project that Women's Studies and academic feminism needs to undertake.

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Notes

- 1 An American proposal, *Fortune*, May 1942, pp. 59–63.
- 2 Panitch and Gindin (2004, p. 10) argue that 'the dynamism of American capitalism and its worldwide appeal combined with the universalistic language of American liberal democratic ideology to underpin a capacity for informal empire far beyond that of nineteenth century Britain's. Moreover, by spawning the modern multinational corporation, with foreign direct investment in production and services, the American informal empire was to prove much more penetrative of other social formations'.
- 3 See Jacqui Alexander's work, especially 2005.
- 4 Some of this analysis was published earlier in Mohanty, 2004.
- 5 For an insightful discussion of the category of the political see Rubin, 2005.
- 6 I am indebted to Jacqui Alexander for this discussion.
- 7 See for instance the role played by the Feminist Majority in supporting the Bush administration's war in Afghanistan, all in the name of rescuing Afghani women from the Taliban.
- 8 Srivastava (2005, p. 35) claims that 'even as they produce distinct ethical practices and moral communities, second-wave feminist efforts are also overlaid with the contemporary national discourses of tolerance, multiculturalism, or nonracism common to Western nations such as Canada, the Netherlands, New Zealand, and the United States'.
- 9 There are now numerous books examining the past, present and future of Women's Studies. However, there is little if any discussion of the underlying nationalist and citizenship projects in the field. See especially Weigman, 2002, and Lapovsky Kennedy & Beins, 2005.

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ABSTRACT TRANSLATION

El Imperio Americano y el Proyecto de Estudios de Mujeres: Sobre las políticas de complicidad y disidente

RESUMEN Este artículo traza algunos de los desafíos más urgentes que se confrontan feministas en cuenta al imperialismo, militarización, y globalización corporativa en los Estados Unidos. Se insita en la necesidad de una praxis feminista antiimperialista, específicamente in el contexto de los proyectos académicos y no académicos que se engendran por la erudición y la instrucción de Estudios de Mujeres en Norte América. Una análisis de los eventos de Abu Ghraib ilustra que los prácticos de la militaría Americana y del estado guerrero de Bush/Cheney son hondamente racializado, sexualizado, y generificado. Este artículo llama para un debate feminista con el estado Americano imperial (no solo democrático en termas promisorio) que se conecta los problemas domésticos e internacionales de políticas. Sugiriéndose que la academia Americana es profundamente implicado en el proyecto actual del Imperio, este artículo analice, además, que el lugar de Estudios de Mujeres y su historia de proyectos contra-hegemónicos de ciudadanías como sitios cruciales para la praxis feminista antiimperialista. Este artículo trata de hacer una distinción importante entre la practica feminista, lo que es involucrado en el proyecto del Imperio, y las feminismas radicales, antiimperialistas que se fondean en una política de disidente.