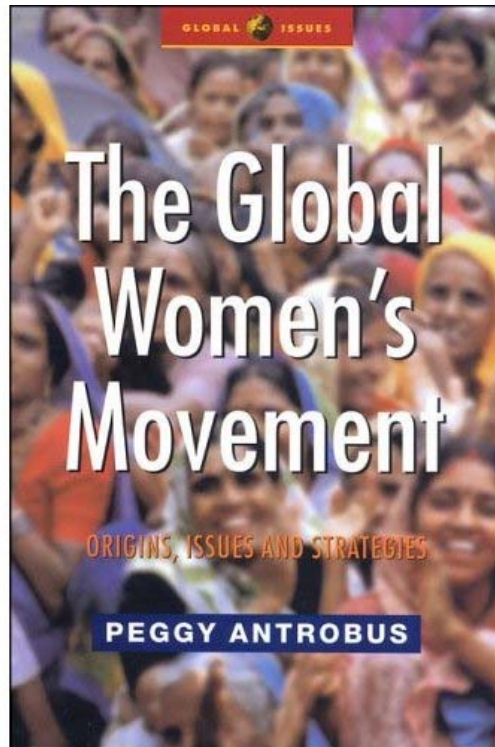


8 - Feminism, Globalisation, Internationalism: The State of Play and the Direction of the Movement (2005)

[Source: Waterman, Peter. 2005. 'Feminism, Globalisation, Internationalism: The State of Play and the Direction of the Movement', www.choike.org/documentos/feminism_global.pdf]



Peggy Antrobus, *The Global Women's Movement: Origins, Issues and Strategies*. London: Zed Books, 2004, 204 pp. Source: <http://www.zedbooks.co.uk/book.asp?bookdetail=3553>

Mrinalini Sinha, Donna Guy and Angela Woollacott (eds.), *Feminisms and Internationalism*, Blackwell, Oxford and Malden (MA). 1999. 264 pp.

'Globalisation and Gender', *Signs*, Vol. 26, No. 4, Summer 2001. Special Issue. Editors: Amrita Basu, Inderpal Grewal, Caren Kaplan, Liisa Malkki. Pp. 943-1314.

Peggy Antrobus, *The Global Women's Movement: Origins, Issues and Strategies*. London: Zed Books, 2004, 204 pp.

Introduction

This is a review article discussing three works, presented in chronological order. The review draws attention to a new focus in feminist writing on the international/global. During much of the 1990s (and after?), most feminist writing on the international sphere was about gender and 'international relations' (Grant and Newland 1991, Sylvester 2002, Peterson 1992, Pettman 1996, Tickner 2005). Most of these were limited by the felt need to critique the discipline of International Relations. The international women's movement or feminist internationalism just about reached their concluding chapters – or paragraphs.

There were, of course, exceptions, as with Cynthia Enloe's cross-disciplinary and bottom-up look at international relations (Enloe 2002). Or compilations on sex workers (such as Kempadoo and Doezema 1998), but here we are clearly debouching into discourses of globalisation and globalised resistance. The shift of feminist interest from international relations to globalisation does not, as we will see, *necessarily* mean an equal shift from the critique of domination or dominant discourses into a focus on 'rights, resistance, and redefinition' (Kempadoo and Doezema's subtitle). But there is something about globalisation discourse which either permits or provokes a focus on not only resistance but counter-assertion (Miles 1996 may be another forerunner here).

This paper does not claim to comprehensive, or even representative, coverage of what has been published during the last five years or so, since this is a rapidly expanding field of feminist concern. The selection, moreover, is biased toward the 'South' and 'Development' – biases I hope to question. Along the way I make reference to other work in the field. In the Conclusion I will draw attention to contributions still awaiting political response or theoretical review.

1. Many Feminisms and one internationalism?

Let us start with the claim of the Sinha, Guy and Woollacott book, as printed on the back cover, and illustrated by a photo of middle-class European and Asian women, some in Asian costume, many wearing cloche hats, under palm trees, at some conference in the late-1920s:

Feminisms and Internationalism addresses the theme of the history of internationalism in feminist theory and praxis. It engages some of the following topics: the ways in which 'internationalism' has been conceived historically within feminism and women's

movements; the nature of and the historical shifts within 'imperial' feminisms; changes in the meaning of feminist internationalism both preceding and following the end of most formal empires in the twentieth-century; the challenges to, and the reformulations of, internationalism within feminism by women of colour and by women from colonised or formerly colonised countries; the fragmentation of internationalism in response to a growing emphasis on local over global context of struggle as well as on a variety of different feminisms instead of a singular feminism; and the context for the re-emergence of internationalism within feminisms and women's movements as a result of the new modes of globalisation in the late twentieth-century.

This is an ambitious agenda. But so is the very title of the book, the first such of which I am aware. We begin with quite extensive abstracts, revealing authors with roots in Korea, Latin America, China, India, Iran and West Africa (?), as well as the more usual North-American and West-European ones. In addition to the introduction and a set of seven cases (the body of the book), we are offered a forum, followed by several review essays. The authors of the seven articles are all new names to me - as are those of the editors - which is again promising. The forum is led off by a veteran historian of Latin American feminisms, Asunción Lavrin. The respondents and reviewers include names more familiar, at least to me, such as Leila Rupp, Mary John, Francesca Miller, Spike Peterson and Val Moghadam.

The editorial introduction provides further orientation to the collection. This is the source of the blurb. I think, however, we immediately run into a problem here, because the editors neither define nor discuss 'internationalism'. As a matter of fact, they don't define or discuss 'feminisms' much either. But a useful contemporary understanding of such can nowadays be assumed (and in any case is much discussed elsewhere in the book). This is not the case for 'internationalism' which, curiously for our fanatically pluralist times, appears here in the singular.

The editors apparently looked for historical (or historians') contributions, and seem to consider that such provide the necessary basis for further academic work on the subject. Yet it seems to me that while we have an increasing body of historical work in this field (see the book's review articles and bibliography, as well as Waterman 1998/2001), what we lack is precisely theory. In the absence of a conceptualisation, a model, or some organising hypothesis, we are likely to create something in which the whole is less than the sum of the parts. The editors do argue for a certain orientation, but this is a general and now commonplace one, seeking a mean between or beyond an abstract universalism and a particularistic relativism. They also make much of 'defamiliarising' and 'decentering'. But this implies that there exist theories, theorists, schools, traditions or tendencies which require such. And, unfortunately, the one classical liberal-feminist historical work worthy of this treatment (Bernard 1987) is nowhere even referred to!

As a result of the above, the articles and reviews sections seem to be held together more by reference to the international than to internationalism. There is, therefore, in this collection much about feminism and (anti-)imperialism, or international relations, and even development. The piece on Yemen makes no reference even to the international and actually belongs to the abundant literature on feminism and *nationalism*. And even if the collection is admirably sensitive to westocentrism it is not to classocentrism. Although labour, socialism and international feminism are mentioned in the introduction, they seem to be hidden from the following history. We are dealing here

almost exclusively with middle-class feminists and middle-class women (sometimes aristocratic ones). I find this both detrimental to the project and somewhat puzzling.

My feeling is that the history of left and popular feminist internationalisms is likely to provide more lessons for the future than that of the liberal and middle-class ones. The latter are today abundant: the problem is precisely making them popular, radically-democratic, egalitarian, and socially-transformatory (a nice way of redefining 'socialism'?). The only explanation I can come up with for this academic blindspot is the international shift, in the 1980s-90s from a social-movement to a political-institutional feminism, in which primary attention went to those who - in the past as in the present - are most politically articulate and influential, who both read and write feminism. Or, possibly, it was due to the domination of feminism in the 1990s (as much else in academia) by discourse analysis, which focuses on meanings at the expense of doings.

This does not, of course, mean that the case studies are necessarily lacking in either historical interest or contemporary political relevance.

Christine Ehrick's chapter on interwar (the European World Wars!) liberal feminism in Uruguay has a fine feeling for North-South, South-South and Argentina-Uruguay contradictions and dynamics, as well as for the class composition and orientation of her particular movement. My feeling is that such national/regional conflicts were inevitable in the period of national-industrial-imperial capitalism. Which does not - as we will immediately see - mean they will disappear of their own accord during our global-informational capitalist period.

Ping-Chun Hsiung and Yuk-Lin Renita Wong employ an understanding of 'difference feminism' (my phrase) to identify independent feminist/women's movement voices in China, which are seeking their own understandings independent of both Western feminism and the Chinese party/state. Each of these claims to speak for Chinese women and they are (therefore?) in diametrical opposition to each other. There is, however, a curiosity here since the authors associate their Western feminism, which they specify quite distinctly, with 'the confrontational paradigm projected in the NGO model' (ix). In so far as the Western NGO model, both nationally and internationally, has been increasingly criticised precisely for its excessive intimacy with the state/interstate (Alvarez 1998), there seems to me a possibility that this NGO model and the Chinese feminist strategy might meet - but at an increasingly problematic place for the development of a global feminist movement!

Now: most of the earlier-mentioned shortcomings are more than compensated for in the exchange between Asunción Lavrin (on Latin America), Leila Rupp ('the Centre'), Mary E. John (India), Shahnaz Rouse (on Islam) and Jayne O. Ifekwunigwe (on 'borderland feminisms'). The 30 or so pages of discussion do not relate closely to the contents of the book. What they do is to begin a cross-national/regional/cultural/epistemological dialogue on women and internationalism that has not previously existed.

Lavrin, who launches the discussion, notes the particularity of Latin American (LA) feminism in successive periods, but she rather emphasises its specific contribution to the international (beyond LA) than its participation in such. She also identifies a sharp debate within LA, between what one might consider an *indigenista* feminist (one who tends to fetishise the indigenous, as distinguished from those who otherwise express it)

and those more open to the international. She also shows a welcome class sensitivity where she states that:

It has been argued that theory is necessary to feminisms for opening channels of understanding across national boundaries because theory has the universal quality that makes feminism international...Yet, the dilemma of how to make theories accessible to women without formal education becomes more puzzling the more sophisticated the theories become...Perhaps the most important task of international feminism is to find that ample theoretical framework capable of embracing the largest number of female experiences. (186)

This is, again, an important reflection on international feminism if not on feminist internationalism. And although she echoes the common Northern feminist admiration for the achievements of the LA and Caribbean feminist *encuentros*, she seems to have missed the one in Chile, 1996, at which previously invisible or repressed tensions exploded in not only a disruptive but also a destructive manner.

Leila Rupp has published a book on three or four major international 19th-20th century organisations of what she herself calls 'elite, older, Christian women of European origin' (190). Although she might seem to be there reproducing the limitations of the collection under consideration, her ideas on how to approach/understand feminist internationalism are actually much broader. She argues for looking at this less in ideological terms than in those of the senses and levels of collective self-identity: e.g. organisational, movement and gender ones. In such terms, she suggests, what is important about the conflict Lavrin mentions is less the ideological difference than the fact that the parties involved are talking to each other about it. If her first remarks suggest an interesting research methodology or project, the second might be taken as suggesting the increasing centrality of communicational form to a contemporary internationalism. Rupp concludes on the necessity for looking at feminisms and internationalism (singular again!) from national, comparative and international locations. Then, in a wisely iffy sentence, she argues optimistically for the promise of global feminisms. If nationalism and internationalism do not have to act as polar opposites; if we can conceptualise feminisms broadly enough to encompass a vast array of local variations displaying multiple identities; if we work to dismantle the barriers to participation in national and international women's movements; if we build on the basic common denominators of women's relationship to production and reproduction, however multifaceted in practice; then we can envisage truly global feminisms that can, in truth, change the world (194).

Mary E. John, from India begins by recognising South Asian feminist ignorance of Latin America (an ignorance which, I can assure her, has in the past been blankly, cheerfully or shamefacedly reciprocated). She therefore begins by informing Lavrin, or Latin America - or in any case us - of the history of Indian feminisms. She continues with a challenging reflection on the manner in which globalisation has undermined simple and traditional meanings and oppositions between the 'local' and the 'global', given the extent to which globalisation, even in its early colonial manifestations, helped create the contemporary 'local' manifestations of Hinduism and caste. She then addresses the problematic concepts of 'pluralism' and 'diversity', emphasising (Thank Goddess!) what I earlier suggested, that 'If feminism is not singular, neither is internationalism' (199). She continues with examples of existing or possible internationalisms rooted in the

subcontinent. And ends, again optimistically, on the possibility and necessity of more egalitarian and dialogic Western collaborations, new perspectives on the South Asian region and the Indian diaspora, and attempts to rethink South-South relations. (202)

Shahnaz Rouse's interrogation of religious difference from what one might call the-point-of-view-of-internationalism has a particularly sharp cutting edge. She continues the line traced by Leila Rupp, criticising the academic shift: 1) from a materialist to 'a right of centre, culturalist, even a "civilisational" focus', b) to a kind of 'orientalism in reverse', and c) an ontology of difference, and a new 'exclusiveness' (206). This is fighting talk, informed by a spirit of cosmopolitanism, egalitarianism and solidarity (i.e. internationalism?). But if she may here be criticising her academic or ethnic sisters, she cuts equally radically into a classist feminism. Echoing, again, earlier forum contributions, she argues for a retreat (an advance surely?) from the politics of difference, whether religious or secular, to a politics of experience:

What is called for is a return to the 'everyday as problematic'...The starting point here is not discourse but experience, fraught as that notion may be, and implicated as it is, in representation itself (in the dual sense, figurative and literal)...Rather than posing cultural authenticity in reified, de-historicised ways, we need to examine how capitalism creates difference in seemingly totalising ways but which if examined more closely reveal the close link between existing differences and power relations: secular and religious discourses themselves being two of these. (208)

Capitalism. Now that is a word, and world, which I would have thought relevant to a discussion about the past, present and future of feminism and internationalism! I may be revealing my own particular particularism if I admit that I have, here, no major objection to it being referred to in the singular. I would only suggest two directions in which capitalism (OK, and capitalisms) might be usefully specified if studies of women and internationalism are to be advanced. The first, already implied, is in terms of historical phases, particularly the threats, promises and seductions of its contemporary globalised form. The second, hardly mentioned, never theorised and barely strategised is that of *money* - simultaneously the most abstract and concrete manifestation of capitalism. This is something which, apparently, the women internationalists - handing it out or receiving it - still consider difficult to talk about, whether in mixed company or in public. While their grandmothers, in the cloche hats, might have considered talking about this simply bad taste, the granddaughters presumably see it as a discourse of vulgar materialism. Introducing the everyday into the analysis, theorisation and strategising of feminist internationalism may therefore be more difficult than our last author imagines. I will return to this matter below.

2. Globalisation and gender

Weighing in at what feels like a healthy kilo, over 350 pages in length, containing some 20 contributions, and co-edited by well-known specialists, this special issue of *Signs* makes a substantial feminist contribution to a developing area of study and struggle.

An Editorial sets out the intentions of 'Gender and Globalisation' (henceforth G&G). These are, in the first place, obviously, to fill a lacuna in critical theorising about globalisation - its customary gender-blindness. Whilst feminist political economists and others have recognised the significance of women's subordinate role in internationalization/globalisation, the editors are concerned about the absence of address to women's centrality within, agency in respect of, and social movements in opposition to, globalisation. They are equally concerned that feminist theory should surpass such simplistic binary oppositions (also feminist ones) as globalisation from above/globalisation from below, global capitalism/local social movements, and northern-imperial social movements/southern (anti-imperial?) ones:

The articles in this special issue complicate these approaches...In particular, they address the ways in which political economy, social movements, identity formation, and questions of agency are often inextricable from each other. They discuss the participation of women trying to better their conditions as crucial aspects of globalisation, thereby contradicting the assumption that globalisation is a process imposed solely from above by powerful states or multinational corporations. (944-5).

The attempt to look at globalisation both as a gendered process and in a dialectical manner is carried out through a set of articles, exchanges and book reviews. We have a diverse series of contemporary studies, in which are considered the relation of gender and sexuality to globalisation and nationalism, several of which reflect critically on existing feminist and other globalisation theories. Another group of articles considers the relationship between women's activism and globalisation, again criticising facile assumptions concerning international solidarity. There follows a series of brief dialogues, commentaries and roundtables on aspects of globalisation: these are as varied as: the globalised prison industry, the international division of labour, the anti-globalisation movement, international financial institutions, Chinese feminism, studies of the Middle East, and women-and-globalisation studies more generally.

Whilst the collection contains a number of admirable pieces, I feel it lacks overall impact. This may be because the Editorial actually goes further than what follows. We are certainly presented with challenges to simplistic approaches, 'malestream' or feminist. And much is made of 'agency' – to the point of characterising certain collective behaviour as 'agentive', an adjective - or is it an adverb? - that I won't mind never seeing again. But the Editorial fails to prepare us for the extent to which the papers are addressed to US academic feminist concerns and theory, which are, inevitably, a limited part of, or angle on, our increasingly complex and globalised world disorder. Even when we move from 'agency' to 'movements', the latter turn out to be mostly Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and their international relations. I miss the Latin American feminist demand to move *de la protesta a la propuesta* (from protest to proposition). But, then, the vibrant international/ist movement and thought of and on Latin American women and feminism is also absent (Alvarez 2000, Barrig 2001, Mendoza 2001, Olea Mauleón 1998, Sanchís 2001, Vargas 1999, 2001, 2003, as well as Thayer below). My feeling is, then, that whilst we have a worthy supplement to other feminist work on globalisation, we have here no noticeable advance.

I have other problems with the editing of the collection and writing style. I am not accustomed to finding feminist writing lacking relevant focus or stylistic fireworks. But the 35 pages on the autobiography of a Jamaican Creole woman entrepreneur and adventurer – with no anti-colonial, anti-racist, social reformist or feminist characteristics – seems entirely out of place in this collection, whatever it might tell us about ‘the complex interplay in the nineteenth century between gendered mobility, black diaspora identity, colonial power, and transnational circularity’ (949). Elsewhere in the collection I felt somewhat overwhelmed by a uniform US academic malestream style, in which the personality and subject position of the author is buried under layers of formal stylistic ritual. I do not know whether this is responsible for the considerable overlap or repetition within and across contributions, but it has a dulling impact.

Having got this all off my chest, let me mention some pieces that impressed. These include Suzanne Bergeron's useful overview of political-economic discourses on globalisation; Carla Freeman's case study of Caribbean women who combine their day jobs in the white-collar, but proletarianised and globalised data-entry industry, with spare-time, globalised petty-trading, reveals the limits of any simple class analysis; two pieces on transnational women's/feminist NGO networking, one on Russia, one on South Africa, show how contradictory such relations can be; one of the dialogues, on/against the World Trade Organisation brings us close to where - I hope - the new wave of global feminist activity will be centred. I was, finally, fascinated by a study of the Miss World contest in India, precisely because of its address to the novel, complex and contradictory responses to such of women and social movements locally. I will return to the last two items in more detail, starting with the Indian one.

Rupal Oza's 'Showcasing India: Gender, Geography, and Globalisation', is about the protest surrounding the 1996 Miss World contest in Bangalore. There were here two broad protest movements, a rightwing Hindu-based movement, Defending Indian Culture From Westernization, and a leftwing socialist and/or feminist one Defending The Indian Economy From Globalisation. Whilst there were distinct differences between the two movements, there was a coincidence in 1) seeing representations of women's bodies as endangering India's borders, 2) making the Indian nation and/or state the point of positive identity, 3) failing to come to terms with women's own agency and sexuality, and 4) subordinating women and sexuality to the economy, the nation and the state. Oza draws a conclusion of more general relevance:

The construction of resistance at any level that is predicated on structures of oppression or suppression at other levels or is contained through them is problematic from the start. Equally problematic are the assumptions of political hierarchy whereby gender and sexual politics are put on hold against the priority of local resistance to the overarching force of globalisation. The underlying assumption here is that gender and sexuality...are not already constitutive of globalisation and of local resistance. The political hierarchy in this context, then, is a ruse for denying agency to gender and sexuality. These issues have been raised in the context of the struggles for women's rights and the structural place of the women's movement within nationalism. Therefore, conceptually progressive politics, when framed in terms of local resistance to globalisation yet dependent on adherence to hegemonic structural

positions within a 'new' patriarchy, is politically dangerous and theoretically precarious. (1090)

Although Oza's case deals with a nationally-identified and bounded women's/feminist protest against globalisation, it throws light on the anti-globalisation movement worldwide. Here, too, we find leftwing movements that, because they see globalisation in terms of 'the highest stage of imperialism', must pose against it something like 'the highest stage of nationalism', i.e. a socialism both nation-state-based and defined. In, however, posing the Nation against the Global, such movements not only find themselves in uncomfortable proximity to a rightwing both hated and feared, but are also disqualified for two essential contemporary tasks: 1) developing what has been a traditional *internationalism* into a *global solidarity* movement and discourse (i.e. one that, precisely, displaces the state-defined nation from the centre of politics); 2) re-inventing the democratic nation-state in the light of the global and gender justice movements. The international women's movements, and feminisms, proposing post-national identities, can make a major contribution to these struggles. But do they do this, in the case of the major international movement of our day, the 'global justice', 'anti-corporate' or 'anti-capitalist' movement?

Kathleen Staudt, Shirin Rai and Jane Parpart's discussion suggests that women have been marginal to this latest internationalism, and they seem to consider the anti-globalisation movement responsible for this absence. I would consider it, rather, the equal responsibility of the women's movements and the feminists (as with the late, light presence of labour, and the virtual absence of African-Americans in Seattle)! It is true that, whilst feisty women and prominent feminists have participated in, and are even spokespeople for, the anti-globalisation movement, there has been restricted women's movement presence or explicit feminist engagement here. I can only put this down to the previous *over-politicisation* (state-centredness) of the women's movement, and to the engagement of much of its leadership with inter/national (again: inter-state and state-like) policy-making institutions, or their gender advisory committees. This proposition is lent credibility by G&G and in two ways. The first is explicit, lying in the critiques of international 'ngo-isation', the second is implicit, lying in the paucity of contributions on actual women's/feminist movements confronting globalisation.

There is no shortage, in the real world, of such movements, nor, actually, of feminist address to such. Two references make the point. The first is the book on globalisation, democracy and women's movements by Catherine Eschle (2001). The second is a paper by Millie Thayer (2001) on the relationship between popular women activists at the global periphery and transnational feminism. Here a parenthesis may not be out of place.

The Eschle book does not appear promising, given that its primary focus is on democracy rather than movements and that its form is that of a critique of the literature (already over-represented in the G&G collection). But she is concerned precisely with the necessity and possibility of a feminist contribution to a reinvention of democracy in the era of globalisation. And her understanding of feminism and democracy is one that is dependent on social movements. So, after a long march through and beyond the commonly state-centric theories of democracy, she addresses herself energetically to 'Reconstructing Global Feminism: Engendering Democracy' (Chapter 7). Here she stresses the necessity for the women's movement to be anti-capitalist, as also to

develop 'transversal' (horizontal, reciprocal) relations, and to democratise internally. I do not intend to set up Eschle against G&G, in so far as she develops a note and orientation already present within the collection. Moreover, there are limitations to both her conceptualization and her evidence. 'Transversal' is an evocative but loose term. I would have thought one could say more by developing the classical notion of 'international solidarity' (for my own attempt see Waterman 1998/2001: 235-8). There is also a limitation in so far as her case studies are drawn from a secondary literature that is often stronger in the mode of advocacy than of analysis. Although, finally, she is concerned that the international women's movement be anti-capitalist, she hardly exemplifies this. So it may be that my favourable comparison with G&G lies mostly in her 'movement-centredness'.

Millie Thayer's provocative title is 'Transnational Feminism: Reading Joan Scott in the Brazilian Sertão'. Her rich case study and theoretical argument runs as follows:

Fieldwork with a rural Brazilian women's movement...finds another face of globalisation with more potentially positive effects. These activists create meaning in a transnational web of political/cultural relations that brings benefits as well as risks for their movement. Rural women engage with a variety of differently located feminist actors in relations constituted both by power and by solidarity. They defend their autonomy from the impositions of international funders, negotiate over political resources with urban Brazilian feminists, and appropriate and transform transnational feminist discourses. In this process, the rural women draw on resources of their own based on the very local-ness whose demise is bemoaned by globalisation theorists.

Again, I do not wish to pose Thayer against G&G. Indeed, the intention of the G&G Editorial seems to be rather well exemplified by her paper. Nor is Thayer without her own shortcomings or lacunae. She surely misreads Manuel Castells' masterwork on the information society, since he actually gives women's/feminist movements the space, scope and transformatory significance he denies to workers' ones (Waterman 1999a)! And whilst she suggests a virtuous spiral between, in this case, Northern and Southern feminisms/women's movements, we are not shown how the Southern experience or ideas feeds back to the Northern (or international) movement, rather than to her as a Northern feminist academic. It is, again, the tone of the writer that is at issue here. Gramsci would recognise the disposition of both writers towards the movement: 'scepticism of the intellect; optimism of the will'.

My final thought on G&G is that it cast its net too wide. The field - to move from fishing to agriculture - has actually been better tilled than the Editorial suggests. See, for example, Dickenson (1997), Harcourt (2001), Wichterlich (2000), and two review articles (Eschle 1999 and Waterman 1999b). What is now needed may be more narrowly-focused collections. And, of course, more women's movements making their customarily pertinent, outrageous and utopian contributions to the major internationalist movement of our day.

3. A global women's movement: dawn or DAWN?

Let me start by saying that the Peggy Antrobus book is a brief and welcome introduction to the global women's movement, that as such it fills a long-felt-want, and that it is to be recommended to those new to, unfamiliar with, or who feel they should be allied with, the women's movement. It would - it will - make an excellent text for those doing women's studies, as to those doing social movement studies, whether globally or more locally. Because of its direct treatment of the movement I am going to give it extended attention.

Antrobus is a veteran of the movement, from the Anglophone West Indies, with experience in government, academia, and women's NGOs. These activities have been national, regional and – in particular – international/global. She has written a readable account that manages to combine the Political, the Theoretical, the Professional and the Personal, in a seductive narrative. She is up-front about who she is and where she comes from, about where, when and how she became a feminist (in 1979, at a feminist workshop). She thus places herself on the same plane as her argument, making both eminently open to both approval and criticism. I intend to confront these in the forceful but constructive manner they invite and deserve. Her theoretical/conceptual propositions are clear and a provocation to thought:

Is there a global women's movement? How can we understand such a movement? How can it be defined, and what are its characteristics? My conclusion is that there is a global women's movement. It is different from other social movements and can be defined by diversity, its feminist politics and perspectives, its global reach and its methods of organising. (9).

This is all in Chapter 2. But such specifications continue throughout. The work concentrates on the period covered by the major UN conferences concerning women, starting with the Development Decade of the 1960s-70s (Chapter 3), The UN Decade for Women, 1975-85 (Chapter 4), the global conferences of the 1990s, particularly the World Conference on Women in 1995 (Chapter 6). However, Antrobus begins and ends her book with references to the World Social Forums and Global Justice Movement of the 2000s (3-5, 175-6, and, implicitly, Chapter 10). Her UN-inspired chapters are interspersed with one on the 'lost decade' of the 1980s (Chapter 5), on movement strategies (Chapter 7), on present and future challenges (Chapter 8) and leadership (Chapter 9 but also Chapter 6). In the rest of this review I want to reflect on at least part of what has been briefly mentioned above.

Reconceptualising the global women's and feminist movement

Women's movements, our author argues, are different from other movements, but she nonetheless specifies their problems in a manner common to specialists on social movements more generally:

The confusion and contradictions...reflect the complexity of a movement that is caught in the tension between what is possible and what is dreamed of, between short-term goals and long-term visions, between expediency and risk-taking, pragmatism and surrender, between the practical and the strategic. (11)

Whilst accepting the first of her binary oppositions/tensions as an inevitable *part* of the international women's (or labour) movement, I would stress the second as the dynamic and emancipatory *tendency*. This goes for all her binaries except that between pragmatism and surrender, which does not seem to belong to the set.

Summarising, Antrobus considers the women's movement as *political*, as recognising women's relationship to *social conditions*, as *processal*, as posed against *patriarchal* privilege, as beginning where and when women recognise their *separateness* and even their *alienation, marginalisation, isolation or abandonment* within wider movements for social justice or transformation (14). Fair enough.

But possibly not *far* enough, since Nira Yuval-Davis (2004), for example, powerfully questions the human-rights feminism that has largely conquered - and encapsulated - the international movement over the past decade or so. And Ewa Charkiewicz (2004a) has suggested that the corporations (often invisible within global feminisms) and their bio-political impacts need to be the, or at least a, primary subject for feminists. All this implies tensions within the global women's/feminist movement that are rather more complex than our author allows for.

Antrobus also specifies certain characteristics that differentiate the women's movement from others: the recognition of *diversity*, its *feminist* leadership (but which of 57 often-competing, sometimes-warring, feminisms?), its *global reach*. She distinguishes between an *international* and a *global* movement, identifying a movement between the one and the other during the period she covers. This is a useful distinction, since even once-emancipatory internationalisms increasingly became *internationalisms*. But, for me, a global movement means one that not merely surpasses national internationalisms but which is *holistic*. And the creation of such a movement is, surely, something to be yet constructed rather than simply asserted as existing (as if it were a simple reflex against neo-liberal globalisation?).

So, the theoretical assertions of this book have to be seen as introductory and partial. Necessary, perhaps, but in no way sufficient. And revealing of certain subject positionings that the author may admit to rather than problematise.

Priorities: the South, the UN and the NGO(s)

Peggy Antrobus 'comes from' the South, the UN and the NGO(s). These are all obviously part of the movement but I see no good reason to privilege them to the extent that the other parts (the North, the old East) become background, that other spaces/places/levels (the street, the community, the workplace/union, the Web, the culture) disappear, appear as secondary, and that the NGO appears to be the primary form taken by the movement.

The South: I find in the index some 14 or so references to places in the South and only 3-4 to those in the North (including the no-longer-actually-existing USSR). This imbalance is not simply because of where the author comes from. It expresses a notion that the global movement is *led* by the South. This is not an opinion that would necessarily be shared by all her Southern sisters. Antrobus considers that the movement has been transformed since the 1970s

largely through the influence of Third World feminists and women of colour in North America...(1).

If this is how she starts, then she ends with the challenges confronting

a global women's movement built through the leadership of Third World women...(185).

Perhaps a case could be made for such a vanguard role, but then only on the basis of evidence and argument here absent. I would have thought it closer to both the reality and the need to consider the North/South relationship a dialectical one, in which mutual political influence and dialogue was the major force. This is to leave aside the matter of whether, in talking of the dialectic within the movement, 'North' and 'South' should be unproblematically accepted as primary categories.

The United Nations: Although the influence played by women's presence and feminist analysis in relationship to the UN is certainly *one* determinant of the growth of the women's movement, it is not the only one, or even - one hopes for the future - the dominant one. In so far as it is or was such, then this is surely a highly problematic influence that requires, well, problematising. Peggy Antrobus is not, of course, unaware, of the danger represented by what I would call the inter-state sphere:

Of course there are risks. Many writers have referred to the bureaucratisation of the movement. In a sense the movement itself became a victim of its successful advocacy...[M]any activists...have faced accusations of being co-opted, or having sold out on the movement. (61-2)

Antrobus sees this, however, as a strategic problem (engaging with the state/ preserving autonomy) rather than a theoretical one. In so far, however, as we understand an increasingly corporatised and corporatist UN as bent on, well, incorporation, then we need to recognise the *profoundly contradictory* role it plays with respect to *any* emancipatory movement - of workers and indigenous peoples as well as women (Charkiewicz 2004b). Drawing from Marxist theory on commoditisation and fetishisation, the strategy issue can be expressed more pointedly:

Ultimately, these questions point to the problematic of organisation, of building bridges, of establishing links, learning from mistakes, de-fetishising our relations to the others, reaching out and being reached, sharing resources and creating commons, reinventing local and trans-local communities, articulating flows from movement to society [rather than from the movement to inter/state instances. PW] and vice versa. (De Angelis 2004:12)

Massimo De Angelis might here be expressing ideas learned, amongst others, from feminist analysis. But there are feminists who can also learn from him about the major problem confronting the movement.

The NGO(s): Antrobus recognises, again, the ambiguity of the non-governmental organisation as form, and even the problem of NGO-isation (153-4). But this is again presented as a strategy problem and is not theorised. Nor, for that matter, I think, even

really strategised. The strategy problem would be a matter of where, how and in what way, the NGO *form* relates to the women's *movement*. In so far as the dominant 19th century form of mass mobilisation/control, the socialist/populist/nationalist political party, is in a condition of disrepute and decline (hopefully terminal), the rise of the NGO – providing technical, intellectual and communicational expertise to and support for social movements – is to be welcomed. But, then, this would be not so much a *non-governmental* organisation (dependent for its identity on that to which it is opposed) but an *anti-hegemonic* instance attempting to surpass capital and state (patriarchy, racism, war, etc), and providing support for, rather than the substitution of, recognisable social movements. The concept of NGO-isation, or *ongización*, has been recognised in Latin America as *the* major problem facing the women's movement in Latin America (Alvarez 2000). Once again the tension between management and emancipation rears its Janus head.

Things do not get better. Peggy Antrobus is a long-standing member of DAWN (Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era). This is one of a dozen, or a hundred, of rather professional, socially-critical, international feminist NGOs-cum-think-tanks. This particular NGO is honoured with some 21 references in her index, as against 27 for feminism in general! Moreover, there is no word of criticism for DAWN. Which means that here we are into identificatory-celebratory discourse. This, as far as I am concerned, suggests the imprisonment of DAWN within a practice common to the old social movements (national, labour).

The global women's movement and the secret of fire

It is evident, from this, that feminism and the women's movement have, despite significant breakthroughs, not necessarily discovered the Secret of Fire that releases the new from the old. They may have contributed to such in dramatic and significant ways, but they do not play globally the role of vanguard. And since such a role is anyway increasingly regarded with an Argus eye within the new movements, this is not such a bad thing either. Right now, and for the past five years or so, for example, the global women's movement has needed to learn from a global justice movement that has learned from *it*. Or from those parts of the movements, those theorists, who have done so. Yet the global women's movement, and even some of the more sophisticated feminists still have to move beyond the 'moment of excision' from the old inter/national left (Vargas 1992, citing Gramsci), to fully engaging with and co-creating the new global social emancipation.

Although our author recognises, again, the way in which 'external funding can blunt the political edge of the movement' (155), this is hardly adequate to the case. Foreign funding (from the book's Rich, Guilty and Exhausted North to its Poor, Innocent and Energetic South) is, at least in Latin America, the *sine qua non* of the movement. It would be more helpful to recognise that we are talking of foreign-funded feminism and then to confront the implications of this for the women's movement in not only the South but globally (where it may be 'foreign' in the sense of financiers and foundations with quite other motives than emancipatory ones)!

Whilst the global women's movement is increasingly aware of neo-liberalism and capitalist globalisation, it seems to believe that *its* collective subject, *its* theoretical inspiration and *its* discourse frees itself from the political-economic determinants that DAWN is quite ready to recognise as operating, well, globally. This and related de-

radicalising pressures have been recognised for one hundred years by socialist specialists on the inter/national labour movement (Waterman and Timms 2004:182-5), so why not by a feminist for the women's one? At the European Social Forum, London, 2004, libertarian critics of its top-down structure and commercialised processes issued the slogan, 'Another World is For Sale!'. A more forceful critique is therefore required than this author gives us of managerialism and commodification within what is here championed as an emancipatory movement. *Reducing* the women's movement to the level of other social movements would also mean *releasing* potentials presently imprisoned.

The master's tools and the deconstruction of the master's house

One last complaint, mentioned above, but which is much more widely spread than in this book alone. This is the avoidance of the word 'capitalism' – even by feminists who are or were once socialists. Capitalism does not even get an index reference in Antrobus. Capitalists, mostly after all male, white and patriarchal, call it *capitalism*, and are proud of it. So why cannot it not be so named by feminists, who could and surely should condemn it? This cannot be solely because of their justified criticism of the archaic political-economic determinism of patriarchal socialists. So it has to be due to either a desire to be *salonfähig* (acceptable in the salons within which they have been speaking, to the funders they are dependent upon), or a restriction of their utopia to a kinder, gentler global capitalism, a global neo-Keynesian order – for which no convincing feminist case has been made. Fortunately, *anti-capitalist* feminist networks have appeared in the new global agora, such as the Global Women's Strike highlighted by Antrobus (193-2) and the rather more-significant World March of Women (see below and <http://www.marchemondiale.org/en/charter3.html>).

On the other hand, there is a word well worth avoiding like the proverbial plague, this being 'development'. In so far as this actually means 'the development of capitalism' and/or 'the development of the nation-state' it is a Northern, hegemonic and colonising discourse. Its employment by such Southern activists/scholars as Peggy Antrobus (and an endless series of women's NGOs) implies a significant limitation on attempts to develop a meaningfully emancipatory global feminist discourse. It also reinforces a division between the 'developed' and 'developing' worlds which a global feminist discourse surely needs – in the era of capitalist globalisation – to surpass. As the Black feminist activist and writer, Audre Lorde (1984), once said, 'The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House'.

New addresses, new agoras for the global women's movement

Antrobus makes generous reference to the World Social Forum and the global justice and solidarity movement, to whose birth feminists have made a certain contribution. But, once again, hers is not a critical treatment. By this I mean critical/committed attention to the nature of the movement and the forum, and to the presence of women and the role of feminists, within both (compare NextGENDERation Network 2004). This might seem an excessive demand given the newness and the novelty of both. DAWN, however, has not only been present within the WSF since at least 2002 but is a member of its International Council, and its website provides access to major feminist activities within the WSF in Mumbai, 2004

<http://www.dawn.org.fj/global/worldsocialforum/intfemdialogue.htm>. Yet our author mysteriously claims that

With their overwhelming crowds, simple slogans and easily understood banners, these demonstrations and campaigns are not the spaces of dialogue. Neither is the Forum the space for the negotiations that have to take place with men, and some women, on issues of sexism with the social movements. (176, as also 116-7)

Why, in the name of The Goddess, not?

The Fora seem to me the presently *privileged* space for such global dialogue. And although the Feminist Dialogue at Mumbai may not have highlighted women's place and a feminist understanding of the Forum and the new movement, there is no reason why this should not be so raised by feminists at an event *in which almost 50 percent of the participants are women!* Where else could the feminists and the women's movement be where they will be surrounded by such a high percentage of young, ethnically-pluralistic, democratically-inclined, activist and radical women? Negotiating across tables or in corridors with male inter/state bureaucrats of a certain age? Finally, of course, women's presence and feminist attitudes do not express themselves solely in verbal dialogue but in cultural forms that the movement previously celebrated or invented. The most memorable feminist presence at the WSFs is, therefore, probably that of the tiny *Articulación Feminista Marcosur* (see below), with its 'simple slogans and easily-understood banners'...targeting fundamentalisms! But this book is itself a politics-fixated one and gives little or no attention to either culture or to the cyberspatial communication that is becoming both a condition for and an expression of global feminism (compare another Zed Book Antrobus ignores, Harcourt 1999, particularly the contribution of Agustín 1999).

Whilst Peggy Antrobus might prefer some other space (Yuval-Davis 2004 also, but neither indicates which) for such dialogue, her position actually reveals the late, light presence of the women's movement and feminists within the newest movement in general and the Forum in particular. Prominent exceptions would be the World March of Women <http://www.marchemondiale.org/en/index.html> and the *Articulación Feminista Marcosur* <http://www.mujaresdelsur.org.uy/>, neither of which is mentioned in Antrobus. It would seem to me that the the past fixation of many feminists on Patriarchy, on the Political, and on the UN, have blinded it toward Capitalism, Globalisation and, thus, delayed their forceful address to what is less a New Social Movement (1960s-80s) than a newer Global Justice and Solidarity one (1994-?).

Evidence for this absence is provided by the regular *encuentros* of the Latin American and Caribbean Feminists (also mysteriously ignored by Antrobus). As early as 1996 a discussion document dealing in part with globalisation and the global women's movement was addressed to the Encuentro, in Cartagena, Chile (Vargas 1996). It led to no recorded discussion, the event being dominated by a fundamentalist feminist attack on the rest of the movement as 'patriarchal feminist' (Waterman 1998/2001:Ch.6)! In 2002, the 9th Encuentro met in Costa Rica. It was addressed precisely to globalisation - or at least to '*Resistencia activa frente a la globalización liberal*'. Despite this title and a provocative if problematic discussion document (Facio 2003), the Encuentro hardly addressed the matter. *And it had nothing to say about a WSF that was due to take place a couple of months later in the same continent!* There is here clearly a danger of self-

referentiality, of a movement in the direction of a self-isolating community. Here is another case. I have suggested above that the World March of Women has been more actively engaged (and visible) in the Forums than other feminist initiatives. Yet it has been criticised by other feminists for attempting to hegemonise women's activities within the European Social Forum, Paris, 2003 (NewGENDERation 2004:143). In mentioning such cases I am clearly not proposing these as virtuous alternatives to those bodies mentioned by Antrobus, nor even to her incrementalist orientation. The global women's movement simply requires from its participants and its observers as much scepticism of the intellect as optimism of the will (Gramsci again).

Literary lacunae

Whilst one cannot expect of such a short book a complete rundown of the relevant literature, it might not be too much to ask that it show awareness of *major* books or articles by *compañeras* who have dealt – and are increasingly dealing – with the same subject. Here are some such (which may include material published after the book's deadline): Sonia Alvarez (2000), Alvarez, Faria and Nobre (2003), the classical liberal feminist work in this area by Jessie Bernard (1987), Johanna Brenner (2003, 2004), Zillah Eisenstein (1998), Catherine Eschle (2001, 2003, and Eschle and Stammers 2004), the Peggy Antrobus co-edited(!) special issue of Canadian Woman Studies (2002), the Sinha, Guy and Woolacott collection (1999), Virginia Vargas (2001, 2003), Christa Wichterich (2000). For the flavour of just one of these, which does consider both feminism and the global justice movement critically, consider this:

Conflicts and tensions around gender relations and feminist politics within the GJM offer hope as well as words of caution. Conflicts exist because women activists and their organisations are serious players on the political stage, contesting male dominance not as outsiders but from within the networks of the GJM. Whether feminism will come to inform the radical vision and the everyday politics of global justice activists depends on how well the movements are able to sustain political coalitions that are participatory and willing to engage in dialogue. Movements that make a space for the political and strategic interventions of working class and popular feminist activists and their organisations will constitute a powerful pole of attraction, an alternative for those [in both movements? PW] who now believe they have no choice but to compromise with the neoliberal order. (Brenner 2004:33)

I started by recommending this book and I still do. If the Zapatistas called for 'one no and many yesses', this work contributes to both the no and the yesses. If the World Social Forum says 'Another World is Possible!', then another such book on the same subject is not only possible but necessary. There can, thanks to capitalist globalisation and the growing movement against and beyond it, be little doubt that we will see many.

Conclusion

In the fear of having above expressed too much scepticism of the intellect, and of making only gestures toward optimism of the will, I thought I had better make a final check on the not-quite-ubiquitous web, seeking for 'feminist internationalism', 'global feminism' and related terms. Obviously such a search is most likely to identify work by Anglo-Saxon academics, or others writing in English. And, indeed, this was the case. Whilst all kinds of internationalist feminist activity might be building in the World Social

Forum process, I identified some significant contributions to a new understanding of globalisation, feminism and internationalism from North America.

The first of these was a special issue, or section, of the US journal, *Socialism and Democracy*, on 'Gender and Globalisation: Marxist-Feminist Perspectives', <http://www.sdonline.org/backissues.htm>, guest-edited and introduced by Hester Eisenstein (2004). Even where original, interesting and informative, however, the section seems to have been motivated less by a concern to renew Marxist-Feminism in the light of globalisation than to restate the former in the face of the latter. And even, at one point, a concern to restate a socialist *internationalism*, in the face of a global solidarity movement that relativises a state-defined-nationalism. Thus, an interesting contribution by Tammy Findlay (2004) appears to argue that the Canadian-initiated and Canada-based World March of Women (WMW) is a *local and national movement* that has some kind of *international expression or extension* – an argument unlikely to be welcome to that increasingly global solidarity network itself. The problem of Findlay – and of a whole section of the Canadian left identified with 'progressive nationalism/internationalism', is that it still seems to see the national and the global as separate places or levels, rather than as an increasingly mutually-determining complex, requiring emancipatory strategies that are simultaneously local, national, regional and global. Whilst the WMW quite obviously has the national origins and base indicated above, I would challenge Findlay to read this out of the Charter the latter launched late-2004. It is interesting to note, finally, that the contribution with the most bite on gender, globalisation and the international women's movement – and the left - is the one which makes no reference to Marxism or socialism (Barton 2004)!

The second item I identified appeared to my eyes (as a 'Liberation Marxist'), more promising, even if oriented toward women's studies rather than the women's movement. This was a workshop, 'Towards a New Feminist Internationalism', http://ws.web.arizona.edu/conference/workshops/1a_description.html, organised in 2002 by Miranda Joseph, Priti Ramamurthy and Alys Weinbaum.

Anyone interested in moving on from this review article could do worse than start with these two documents. And if this seems an unconventional conclusion to this review article, I would hope it will encourage readers to treat the piece as just one intervention in a rapidly-developing process...and dialogue?

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