

## Women, War, and Feminist Theory

### 1.1 Introduction

This chapter surveys the main arguments which form the background of this book's theoretical framework and which underpin its central theme on the relationship between feminism and nationalism. It is focused strongly on prevailing Anglo-American feminist perspectives on the woman, war, and nation nexus, to which I introduce what are arguably the dominant Greek feminist perspectives whose first articulation occurred in the context of the late nineteenth century. An overarching objective of this exercise is to emphasise the importance of the historical and cultural specificities that shape feminisms and which are crucial to an assessment of the feminism–nationalism relationship.

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Warfare and military service have played key roles in national histories and mythologies and in the fashioning of gender identities. As Lake and Damousi (1995: 1) have observed, investigations into the relationship between gender and war have shown the ways in which war has, on the one hand, profoundly shaped the politics of gender and, on the other, given shape and meaning to the prosecution of wars.

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There are two dominant traditions within Western feminism from which a plethora of others derive. On the one hand, there is the 'Moral Mother',<sup>1</sup> a term coined by American feminists in reference to a philosophical construction that underpins the considerably widespread feminist belief in women's innate pacifism and natural aversion to aggression. On the other, there is the long-held commitment within feminism to the full implications of liberal equality from which stems the argument in favour of women's participation in the military as integral to rectifying their status as second-class citizens. This chapter makes extensive use of both Bloch's (1978) 'Moral Mother' and the categories that political philosopher Jean Bethke Elshtain<sup>2</sup> has adopted in her critique of the philosophical rationale behind the prosecution of wars and the gender-role divisions within the discourses of war. I refer specifically to the 'Just War/Beautiful Soul' paradigm, which originates in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind* ([1807] 2003) and which, alongside the Moral Mother, has enormous validity across a wide spectrum of feminist perspectives on the subject of woman and war when stripped down to their basic working assumptions. The 'Just Warrior' is a term coined by Elshtain, designed to capture the male identity inscribed and reinscribed in the discourse of 'armed civic virtue'. The Beautiful Soul represents Hegel's attempt to convey the mode of consciousness of those human beings full of great individual goodness and purity, yet cut off and abstracted from the world of which they are a part. Although individual men and women can be Beautiful Souls as discrete individuals, Hegel does not include women explicitly when he elaborates on the historic consciousness of Beautiful Souls. Elshtain asserts that women in the West have been cast as a collective Beautiful Soul and that Hegel captured an epoch (the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries), abstracting from social and cultural forces at work and honing them into dense

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grandiosities. During this epoch, woman-as-Beautiful Soul became a constitutive myth explaining, justifying, and perhaps even serving as a consolation for woman's retreat from sites she once routinely occupied.

Deciding the place of women in men's wars has been critical to feminist theory and politics over the past three decades. Traditionally excluded from the warrior role and from military decision-making, women have analysed the meaning and functioning of military institutions and debated whether to enter them or to end them. The threat of nuclear holocaust, gendered notions of citizenship and nationhood which are perceived as connected to women's exclusion from war (at least in the sense of direct combat) and from war narratives,<sup>3</sup> and the exploitative use of women's labour and feminine symbols for military purposes<sup>4</sup> have all prompted numerous responses from feminists focusing on the relationship between gender and militarism. 4

As mentioned, there are two dominant perspectives on the question of women's relationship to war and the military, both of which have developed from common roots in the second-wave women's movements of Britain and North America. While each is invested in women's empowerment and each uses the tools of the new discourses and policies of equal rights, their respective analyses of what that empowerment should look like are fundamentally different. A major strand of contemporary feminism is staunchly anti-war and anti-militarist. It opposes the military for its use of violent diplomacy, and associates that violence precisely with the military's culture of virulent masculinism. Feminists who support this theory revive the historic association of pacifism and feminism, which dates back to the feminist anti-war campaigns of the Great War. They attempt to create a new theory of non-violence and society based on feminist principles. Feminist anti-militarists use a variety of theoretical and activist tools to explain military culture as diametrically opposed to men's culture. Moreover, they judge the military and militarism as impediments to justice and peace. 5

This pacifist feminism often presupposes a maternalist foundation and invokes the powerful symbol of the Moral Mother *against* the image of the male Just Warrior. The Moral Mother is nurturing, compassionate, and politically correct—she is '...the sovereign instinctive spokesperson for all that is living and vulnerable' (Di Leonardo, 1985: 602). Ruddick (1984), for example, has laboured to dislodge her concept of 'maternal thinking' from nineteenth-century biologism and to construct a new theory of feminist pacifism based on the concept of 'preservative love' (in Pierson, 1987: 205). Elshtain's considerable contributions to the field (1982, 1987, 1992) have often borrowed from Ruddick's work, in which she endorses a conservative feminist pacifism that encourages women both to stay at home with young children and to fight militarism. 6

The second approach involves women interested in joining the military, scholars recovering histories of women in the military, and supporting policies to expand women's professional role in the military. This cluster of approaches is what Feinman (2000) refers to as feminist egalitarian militarists—those who insist that it is women's right and even responsibility to perform martial service because the military is the sine qua non of full citizenship and thus 7

equality. Feminist egalitarian militarists use equal rights discourse and policies to insist that women play a full and unimpeded role in the military. Both these perspectives, for and against the military on seemingly feminist terms, ultimately seek the extension of women's citizenship, but define it in markedly different ways.

## 1.2 The Moral Mother

Anti-militarist feminists and non-feminists alike have used language that implies a belief that women as mothers ought to reform warring males, courtesy of their proximity to nature and their responsibility for human reproduction. Implicit is the notion that war is neither a necessary outcome of conflict, in a volatile world of antagonistic and distrustful states, nor a continuation of politics by other means. Rather, in this formulation, it is men who confuse violence with power, and politics is indeed to be rescued from war by none other than the Moral Mother, an image whose evocative power gathered strength following its appropriation by feminists. Indeed its popular cultural status seems to have survived well through three decades of feminist activism in both Europe and America. 8

The Moral Mother represents the vision of women as innately pacifist and men as innately warmongering. It is she who 'will take the toys away from the boys'—to coin a phrase which, according to Di Leonardo (1985: 617), has been in use since the first 'Women's Pentagon Action' in America in 1980. The origins of pacifist maternal feminism lie in the modern intensification of mothering work and the ideology of idealised motherhood. Through the manipulation of images of women as morally superior mothers and wives, nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century feminists claimed the right to enter the public world as moral reformers and 'social housekeepers'. Indeed, Greek feminists echoed precisely this position as early as 1887. 9

Ambiguities as regards war roles and alternative forms of women's agency were common in Ancient Greece,<sup>5</sup> and also in feudal northern Europe. With the emergence of industrialisation (and, with it, the bourgeois nation-state) towards the late eighteenth century, '... absolute distinctions between men and women with regard to violence' (Zemon-Davis, 1975: 15) had come to prevail. Women became cast as a collective Beautiful Soul; that is, as the collective projection of the pure, the rarefied, the self-sacrificing, the otherworldly, and the pacific Other in opposition, and complementary to political philosophy's complex construction of the (male) Just Warrior. 10

Elshtain (1982a) observes that cultural images of men and women are partly rooted in Just War arguments (to which Hegel subscribed), and that the solid allocation of their construction<sup>6</sup> occurred, not surprisingly, during the rise of capitalism. Just War theory offers an alternative discourse to that of the discursive hegemony of Hobbesian/Machiavellian realism whose bracing promise '... is to spring politics free from the constraints of moral judgement and 11

limitation, thereby assuring its autonomy as historic force and discursive subject matter, and to offer a picture of the world of people and states as they really are rather than as we might yearn for them to be' (Elshtain, 1992: 260).

This dismissal of alternative models of 'international relations' as idealistic and naive was replaced by a set of presumptions about the human condition that created abstract images of men and women as isolated bundles of private urges, passions, and preferences. As for the world scene, a similar universe in which states are, again, portrayed as pre-positing bundles of interests was envisaged, each seeking (just like the individuals in Hobbes's 'state of nature') to enhance and secure their power. Not surprisingly, in this view, a war of all against all (though avoidable within a state towered over by some sovereign Leviathan empowered with sufficient force to keep all in awe) is inevitable in the world scene, punctuated only by fragile peace when some equilibrium of terror manages to prevail. 12

By contrast, Just War theory represents a wholly different tradition rooted in early Christianity and, in particular, in the writings of Saint Augustine.<sup>7</sup> While it presents a pacifist ontology, it is by no means a pacifist discourse as it distinguishes between legitimate and illegitimate use of collective violence. Saint Augustine, in the *City of God*, denounces the Pax Romana as a false peace kept in place by evil means and indicts Roman imperialist wars as paradigmatic instances of unjust war. But he defends, with some regret, the possibility that a war may be waged justly in defence of a common good and in order to protect the innocent from certain destruction. In other words, Just War thought requires that moral considerations enter into all determinations of collective violence as a serious ground for making political judgements. Such sensibilities have survived almost intact in the nuclear age (Elshtain, 1992a: 265). 13

Contemplating European feminists' historic association of women with pacifism and the Beautiful Soul–Just Warrior opposition, Elshtain (1987: xiv) encourages us to keep in mind the symbiosis of fighter and victim presumed by the language of war and peace; two constructions which support each other. In matters of war and peace, the female soul cannot put a stop to suffering; it lacks the capacity to fight the mortal wounding of sons, brothers, husbands, and fathers effectively. Instead it perpetuates the long tradition of women as weepers and as keepers of the flame of peaceful values (Huston, 1982: 271–82), which often provide in themselves the excuse for waging war. Indeed, the Just Warrior requires the female second line of defence—as 'buddies' and support troops—to provide the material conditions and the spiritual sustenance which enable him to fight on. 14

Elshtain argues that medieval men and women inhabited a structured but loose-fitting 'saeculum', in which distinctions between war and peace, reason and emotion, nature and culture, science and faith, domestic and civil, proper and uncouth, even male and female were to some degree blurred. Involved in nearly all the trade guilds, women worked, marketed, hunted and tended animals, and went on pilgrimages. As there was no separate civic or public sphere as a distinct social form, hence no citizen in the modern sense, sharp cleavages between civic and private purposes had not yet appeared. These categories ' . . . congealed 15

over time with the rise of nation-states, markets and capital, the construction of peoples as mobilisable populations' (Elshtain, 1987: 76). The association of women with peace and the preservation of life and its counterpart, the identification of war as a male enterprise, coincided with female privatisation and the construction of the private/public sphere distinction, the sexual division of labour, which followed it, and thus the culmination of the housebound wife as the ideological norm.

As domesticity for women took on the force of a cult and as vocationalised motherhood was glorified, it became convenient for men caught up in the hurly-burly of the capitalist economy to consign the compassionate Christian virtues to women and the private sphere. In this sense, the Moral Mother, the anti-war campaigner, could be cast as an accomplice of warmongers; the necessary alibi for war, evidence that society could at once wage war while preserving its soul within half of the population, was foundationally excluded from the new social contract (Pateman, 1988).

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Of course the link between women and peace campaigns goes back much further into the mists of history than the rise of industrial society. Ranging from the fiercely anti-war sentiments of ancient Greek tragedy (e.g., the play *Trojan Women*) and comedy (i.e., the plays of Aristophanes in which women resort to sex strikes and armed rebellion in order to stop wars) to the Middle Ages, the feminine is often presented as inimical to conflict.<sup>8</sup> Yet with industrialisation, this connection became more homogeneous, widespread, and systematic. In Victorian society, in particular, or wherever the archetype of femininity held sway, the equation of female nature with the pacific virtues became commonplace. Against this background, one wonders how the philhellenes and other members of 'polite' society, in the salons and the boudoirs of northern Europe, responded to the images and mythology which emerged from the Greek War of Independence, some of whom recorded their fascination with the unlikely naval captain, Lascarina Bouboulina, for example.<sup>9</sup>

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The second half of the nineteenth century was marked by a vigorous process of nation-state consolidation, during which the fledgling Greek bourgeoisie attempted to establish its presence and authority, borrowing predominantly from the narratives and practices of the West. It was within this nation-building environment that the first Greek feminist collective emerged in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The collective, founded and led by Kallirhoe Parren (1861–1940), and inspired by the participation of women in war throughout history and in the Revolution particularly, presented a hybrid model of Greek womanhood which blended Western culture's Just Warrior—normally attributed to men—with the Beautiful Soul in the course of their campaigns for the integration of women in the new nation. This stood in contrast to northern European feminist constructions of the Beautiful Soul as the polar opposite, rather than the complement, to Hegel's male Just Warrior. Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815–1902) enunciated this view when she condemned the '... male element in civilisation as a destructive force, stern selfish, aggrandising, enamoured by war, violence, conquest, acquisition, breeding in the material and moral world alike discord, disorder, disease and death' (1882, in Elshtain, 1982a:

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52). Her construction of women as innately pacifist was employed in her campaign for the women's franchise. Indeed, a firm plank of the suffrage platform was the claim that women's vote would weigh heavily on the side of peace. Nineteenth-century Greek feminists' enthusiasm about women's armed contributions to important wars and their recognition of the legitimating power of this history in the campaign for women's integration in the new nation seem remote from the stance of their American contemporaries. But Greek feminists' celebration of masculine valour in women was simultaneously if oddly tempered by an accompanying essentialism that endowed women with a special talent to distinguish just wars from unjust wars. Of course, this attempt to reconcile seemingly contradictory impulses was unstable and unsustainable, especially as history unfolded and feminists around the world were forced to deal with new conflicts and with the horrors of the Great War, in particular. But this is not a history of neat continuities and linear narratives, as no history can be. In fact, tensions and ambivalence on the question of women's participation in war were present in the narratives of Parren since the very inception of *The Ladies' Newspaper*. At times Parren aligned herself very closely with Cady Stanton's pacifism, but this became clearly defined and articulated only well into the twentieth century. In a sense, the issue of war has always been contentious for feminists in its unique ability to bring to the surface submerged and unresolved tensions around core but inadequate binaries—equality versus difference versus sameness, nurture versus nature.

### 1.3 Just Warriors

The framework of nineteenth-century Greek feminism (which resurfaced sporadically in the discourses of subsequent generations) incorporated and extended to woman the concept of Just War(riors). It was a framework that enabled feminists to argue for the extension of women's national citizenship role, without tampering too radically with received notions of femininity. Kallirhoe Parren launched the first Greek feminist publication entitled the *The Ladies' Newspaper (Efimeris ton Kyrion)* in 1887. In line with broader political trends, the newspaper sought to legitimate the purpose of women's national advancement largely on the basis of history. Tributes to the efforts of revolutionary figures such as Bouboulina and Mado Mavroyeni became ubiquitous within the paper's narratives.

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The Great War saw a radical shift in Greek feminist opinion. Having concluded that it was fundamentally different to the 1821 War of Independence, in which Lascarina Bouboulina and others had fought a century earlier, Kalirhoe Parren adopted an ardent pacifist position. Indeed, her vehement opposition to the Great War resulted in her exile from Greece by the then prime minister Eleftherios Venizelos, in what was to be one in a long series of clashes between Greek feminism and (expansionist, in this case) nationalism. Of course, Parren's position also reflected the growing momentum of the international pacifist movement.

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A contrary shift occurred within British feminism. After Britain's declaration of war, Emmeline Pankhurst (1858–1928), leader of the militant British suffragettes, shifted to a position of supporting the British government against Germany. The turn has been interpreted as tactical; accusations of political expediency turned on the thought that her earlier concern for the sanctity of human life had not been grounded in principled pacifism. Unlike Cady Stanton, for instance, Pankhurst did not question the war or the traditional sexual division of war labour (i.e., the men-fight-women-weep framework) which it perpetrated. The twofold aim of the suffragettes became (a) to encourage women to enter the many areas of work opening up to them on the home front in support of the war, and (b) to incite all British men to volunteer for the front. The support of many suffragettes was underpinned by the perception that the war gave women an opportunity to argue that they, like men, could actively participate at the 'front line' of war. In doing so, it was a short logical leap in arguing that women had earned the right to vote as they, too, had defended the nation. Other suffragettes preserved their anti-war stance, sustaining the belief that women's suffrage and permanent peace could go together. 21

What should one make of Parren's and Pankhurst's shifting attitudes to war and women's role in them? For Parren, Greek women were at times lauded for their Beautiful Souls and for their steadfast refusal to fall prey to the ethos of destruction, which comes with war. At other times, Parren eulogised women who raised arms and proved better soldiers on the battlefield than did men. Did Parren's application of Just War doctrine, in which the Moral Mother, Beautiful Soul, and Just Warrior Woman co-existed, make sense? And can we, therefore, better understand early English feminist views in light of the imperialist context in which they originated? 22

In 1911, with the waste and destruction of the Boer War in mind, the white South African feminist Olive Schreiner considered the callousness towards life and death as instinctual in men of certain cultures. In Schreiner's analysis, one of the few irreducible differences was the 'somewhat differing angle' from which each sex perceived and valued the giving and taking of life. This difference, in turn, stemmed from the different sexual function with regard to reproduction (see Pierson, 1987: 212). This essentialism was evident in Parren's narrative also but was constructed as compatible with the celebration of armed-female patriotic defiance in the context of wars she considered to be *just*, such as the Greek Revolution. It is worth pausing to muse on the reflections of two of the most prominent first-wave anti-militarist feminists who have left an indelible mark on contemporary modes of thought. For British feminist Virginia Woolf (1882–1941)<sup>10</sup> and American pacifist Jane Addams (1860–1935),<sup>11</sup> the Beautiful Soul had different origins. 23

Jane Addams accepted the peace-war dichotomy as a given and recast it as an eternal opposition between feminism and militarism. Addams begins with the familiar statement of women as pacific 'Other' in order to extend it to the suggestions of feminism as a collective pacific 'Other'; thus casting feminism as the political embodiment of Beautiful Souldom complete with historical and anthropological grounding. Such a politicisation of the Beautiful Soul was intended as a counter-force to the collective embodiment of the warrior mentality and 24

of the politics of force and coercion. Addams's presumption that the extension of suffrage to women would automatically humanise governments and her evasion of questions about power and responses to the use of force have not gone unnoticed by feminist theorists like Elshtain. Nevertheless, unlike Woolf, she has been praised for at least keeping women in contention in the civic arena, fighting as public citizens for their ideals.

Woolf traced the origins of the Beautiful Soul 'state' to women's general exclusion from the social apparatuses of power (and wealth). 'Through no merit of their own, but rather because of their relegation to powerlessness and poverty, women had little or no investment in any one country's resources and institutions'. It was from this position of outsider that Woolf could have her female pacifist, internationalist subject state: 'As a woman I have no country. As a woman I want no country. As a woman my country is the whole world' (Woolf, 1966: 197). 25

Valorising women's outsider status in her vision of a society of the indifferent, Woolf argued for women working to prevent war by earning their own living, while refusing to be co-opted by the 'system'. The system to which Woolf was referring is located within the Machiavellian tradition of classic armed civic virtue where women, as collective 'Other', outside of and subversive to 'Realpolitik', are required to 'act as mirrors which are essential to all violent and heroic action' (Woolf, 1978: 35, in Elshtain, 1987: 236). Women, therefore, would have to stop serving, as they had been for centuries, ' . . . as looking glasses possessing the magic and delicious power of reflecting the figure of man at twice its natural size'. 26

Written in the midst of the Spanish Civil War (1936–39), Woolf's *Three Guineas* sounded a dire warning as to the importance of seeing the connections between patriarchy and militarism, patriarchy and fascism, and patriarchy and war. The one thing that all institutions, administrations, and systems of government had in common was that they were all male and all emphasised the necessity of the sexual division of labour, which proved ' . . . essential to their domination' (in Pierson, 1987: 218). It was this hierarchical division of labour (public man, private woman) that fundamentally underpinned structures of dominance and subordination in society, which in turn were gendered. Therein lay the germ of male dictatorship and female hero worship. Men's association of masculinity with dominance, which had its most extreme manifestation in fascism, could be short-circuited by women's indifference, rather than through their participation. 27

The connection between war and men's identification with fighting could lead to one of two positions: One was to advocate female combat as a means of breaking up the male monopoly on the 'hard virtues' and thus divesting them of the need to prove their masculinity through war. The second position, the one she adopted, was to advocate a strategy of indifference. Deliberately neglecting women's exclusion from the citizen's responsibility (and right) to bear arms (namely, the fact that pacifism was imposed upon women), Woolf sought equality of the sexes not through admitting women to combat but through liberating men from militarism. Her 28

strategy was to deny men (and war) the legitimacy traditionally afforded to them by women's engagement with the effects and demands of war. To this extent, hers was a campaign of 'radical disinterestedness' towards war.

Elshtain (1987: 235) criticises both Woolf and Addams for their middle-class convictions, including the great trust in the power of moral agency to transform consciousness and, by extension, social life. In the case of Woolf, Elshtain stiffens her tone and accuses her of seeking to 'de-realise' rather than realise the citizen with her outsider, peaceful separationism. The *Angel in the House* was not to be deconstructed by Woolf but had simply to relocate, as the daughter of educated men, marching into society. A double standard is thus highlighted: middle-class women were still presumed morally superior and were to retain their purity by pursuing their individual ends in the professions, finally bringing their imprint to bear upon the entire world. And all this while oblivious to the fact that their exclusion and bourgeois nature were utterly intertwined.<sup>12</sup> 29

Reading Elshtain's critique of Woolf and Addams, one wonders how Kallirhoe Parren, the magicians of the Spanish Civil War, or the *adartisses* of the Greek Resistance movement would respond (recalling that Woolf was writing during the Spanish Civil War). Woolf's reaction to the Spanish republican woman fighter merely emphasised the fact that women can be just as easily seduced by war as men. Woolf's rejection of the nation and nationalism as masculine constructs (i.e., to have a nation is to become masculine, which is irrelevant to women), speaks directly against the experiences of those women whose political identities were forged in the context of nation-building conflict. Woolf's analysis failed to acknowledge the specificity of national circumstances in determining feminist pursuits of women's empowerment, which may incorporate participation in war. A feminist pacifism based on the liberation of men from militarism, facilitated by women's engagement in a private war of indifference, simply had no currency in 1936 Spain or in 1940s Greece. 30

In the case of the tripartite occupation of Greece (1941–44)<sup>13</sup> during the Second World War, Janet Hart's (1996) oral histories of surviving women partisans of the (Greek) National Resistance (Ethniki Adistasi) showed how women connected their active participation in national liberation with their own liberation as citizens and women; women seized the nation-rebuilding episode as an opportunity to become recognised political subjects. Although these developments were not consolidated institutionally in post-war Greece, the experience of mass political participation occasioned a shift in gender consciousness and relations in the country. 31

Either Greek and British feminists had a fundamental and arbitrary difference of opinion about the nature of women and of war or differences in their respective experiences of war need to be examined against the backdrop of differing national trajectories. It is clear that in the context of Phalangist or Nazi occupation, a strategy of indifference would be rather difficult. That is, the wars prosecuted by an imperial power like nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Britain on the one hand, and the liberation conflicts waged by Greeks in the 1820s and 1940s on the 32

other, were sufficiently different to generate radically different feminist attitudes to war and women's participation in them. And yet these differences did not shape the perspectives which came to dominate northern European and American feminist cultures.

#### 1.4 Moral Mothers *and* Freedom Fighters

Despite the ubiquity of the *Panagia*<sup>14</sup> that characterises modern Greek culture, the Moral Mother does not entirely dominate the ideological landscape. As Parren argued over 120 years ago, the symbolic domain also contains disturbing and contradictory images of women warriors. Amongst them are women who enlisted in the tsarist army (as they do today in Western military institutions) as professional soldiers, as well as women who joined liberation guerrilla armies.<sup>15</sup> Parren pursued an ideal of female subjectivity which blended all these images (the Moral Mother on the one hand, the Freedom Fighter on the other) in order to stake her claims more forcefully. Parren's stance must be projected against a background of nation-building and the emergence of a national bourgeoisie in need of a legitimising discourse. Not only are war stories the backbone of newly created societies but also, by extension with the emergence of independent states out of the feudal mire, such stories become expressions of nationalism.<sup>16</sup> The freedom of individuals and states must therefore be achieved through conflict, especially during the era of nation-creation which followed the collapse of the feudal order. Of course, this gendered narrative of nationhood excludes the active representation and agency of women who labour behind the "front line" and who consequently remain barred from national histories. Herein lay the reason for Parren's emphasis on the women warriors of the Greek Revolution, prompted by the broader context of vigorous national-creation and efforts to legitimise the fledgling nation-state.

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In contrast to the Greek case, the Moral Mother retained her allegorical dominance within Anglo-American feminism during most of the late nineteenth century through to the present. Whether she is invoked or denied, the Moral Mother is a central symbolic figure in Western debates over gender and militarism. Much of the resulting literature treats 'gendered topics' but avoids dealing with gender issues. The articles in *Over Our Dead Bodies* (Thompson, 1983) are exemplary in this regard. Dorothy Thompson's introduction focuses on the global nuclear threat and only secondarily on women as historical actors in combating that threat. Women are unique here only because '... even more than the average "non-expert" citizen they tend to mistrust their own judgements' (Di Leonardo, 1985: 603). That is, women are addressed as the quintessential objects of state dishonesty and manipulation, as the generic group of citizens who are denied a role in shaping their own future because they lack expertise. Women become disenfranchised citizens struggling with others against official lunacy.

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Enloe (1983) helps take the argument beyond militarism as male and wrong. Her focus is not on protesting women but on women caught up in militarisation. Paying homage to Woolf, she shares the conviction that women as outsiders have a valuable perspective to bring to analyses of war and peace. Just as Woolf exposed the threadbare nature of the claims of patriotism on

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women, Enloe subjects the military's definition of 'national security' to feminist scrutiny. Using its privileged relationship to the state, she argues that the military interprets national security in its own interests, aiming at '... not only the protection of the state and its citizens from external foes, but also and perhaps primarily, the preservation of the existing, male dominant social order' (1983: 11). Following closely in the footsteps of Woolf, Enloe investigates the structural and ideological interconnections between patriarchy and militarism, shedding light on the complexities of their symbiotic relationship.

This wholly defensible position simply echoes the left-wing critique of the imperialist state (e.g., the left wing of the British Labour Party has been claiming since the 1960s that the British state bureaucracy, having lost its colonies, treats the lower, middle and working classes as the last colonials in need of colonial rule).<sup>17</sup> In this assessment, the military's purpose is not to defend the people but to superimpose upon them, aided by an incessant demand for public resources, a sense of being under siege. Enloe takes the argument further by pointing out that such theories lack gender analysis and, so, are less effective than they could otherwise be. She argues that the American military is dependent on the ideological construction of masculinity and femininity as complementary; the former bound up with action and combat, the latter with the need for male protection and sexual accessibility to men. Probing the contradictions in what military commanders want from women, Enloe helps expose the cracks in an institution that seeks to appear invulnerable before the world. 36

Enloe attempts to use her findings to indicate the best strategies for feminist anti-militarist politics. She proposes that '... if women's situation is not part of the explanation of militarism, but only part of the litany of its victims, women's experiences can be ghettoised as women's issues, to be assigned significance by male disarmament leaders only as they broaden the base of the movement's public support' (1983: 211). Enloe clearly subscribes to the theory that women are innately pacifist but simply rejects pacifism and abstention as useful tactics. Despite her excellent analysis of the gendered aspects of US militarism, a sociological perspective of the army as a workplace is necessary to address, for example, the unacknowledged, exploitative use of women's labour, the creation and maintenance of male military activities (combat), and the associated definition of non-military womanhood that justifies women's second-class citizenship and sexual exploitation are not discussed. Enloe overlooks the fact that the Moral Mother construct is still used for militarist and non-militarist ends and, pertinent to this book, she does not acknowledge the power of cultural, historical, or national specificities in shaping perspectives on the possible ways in which women, war, feminism, and nationalism may interact. 37

## 1.5 Conclusion: Feminism and National Histories

In summary, even though Enloe offers a modern argument for fighting militarism within the military, she fails to account successfully either for the Moral Mother and the Beautiful Soul or for the makings of a Just War. The ubiquity of the Moral Mother across a broad range of 38

feminist narratives provides ample cause for comment. Granted that today women cannot afford to exclude themselves axiomatically from the military complex, where is the line to be drawn? Segal's (1982: 283) response relies on the perception of the military, and of combat in particular, as a masculine proving ground: 'If women are fully integrated into the military, then this arena loses its function. A young man cannot prove he is a man by doing something that young women can do'.

An investigation of the pro-enlistment feminist approach harks back to a pre-utilitarian, Hobbesian model of society in which civil society is a battleground and in which women must learn to fight dirty. Making generous use of military metaphors, 'Hobbesian' feminists declare politics and political theory as a paradigm case of the oppressor and the oppressed (see Atkinson, 1970: 37, in Elshtain, 1982b: 611). There is tough talk about sex war, shock troops, and the need for women to be integrated into the extant power structure construed as the aggregate of all those who defend law and order, wear uniforms, or carry guns for a living. Women are enjoined to prepare for combat (the '. . . national guard . . . state troopers . . . sheriffs') as the only way to end their 'colonisation' (see Brownmiller, 1975: 388). The refreshing aspect of this type of feminist perspective is that it strips human relations of sentimental illusions. Of course the negative effect is that all that remains is instrumentalities and a model of human agency which is incompatible with any socially constructed identity (e.g., gender or class), irreducible to urges and preferences. At that point, politics becomes a question of who controls whom and the possibility of reciprocity between men and women is eliminated. 39

Many feminists, who are interested in the redefinition of women's citizenship, see women's relief from men's protectorate as a key issue. Self-defence should not be seen as a masculine prerogative but rather as the necessary underpinning of full citizenship and self-government (Benton, 1991: 159). Damousi and Lake (1995), referring to the continuing status of women as 'the protected' (as officially declared at the Australian nation-state inauguration of 1901), concur with Stiehm (1983: 4) that women's exclusion from the national business of self-defence has simply rendered women more vulnerable to attack from assailants at home as well as abroad. 40

Elshtain (1992a: 56) offers another example of 'modified feminist realism', which involves a legal brief put together in 1981 in the United States by the National Organisation for Women (NOW), as part of a challenge to all-male military registration. Beginning with the claim that compulsory, universal military service is central to the concept of citizenship in a democracy, NOW buttressed an ideal of armed civic virtue. If women are to gain 'first-class citizenship', they too must have the right to fight. Laws excluding women from draft registration and combat duty were admonished as perpetuating archaic notions of women's capabilities. Moreover, 'devastating long-term psychological and political repercussions' were said to have been visited upon women, given their exclusion from the military of their country. 41

Enloe (1983: 16–17) argues that NOW's brand of equal opportunity or integrationist feminism seems devoid of a critical edge, functioning instead to reinforce the military as an institution and militarism as an ideology by perpetuating '... the notion that the military (as we know it) is so central to the entire social order that it is only when women gain access to its core that they can hope to fulfil their hopes and aspirations'. One must also keep in mind the fact that the majority of women in the armed forces of the United States, at present, do not identify themselves as feminists. Paradoxically, NOW's repudiation of 'archaic notions of women's capabilities' became a tribute to archaic notions of men's role. Because of the indebtedness of their discourse to presumptions geared historically against women, and the values to which they are symbolically if problematically linked, integrationist feminists call for the full participation of women in the military, choose to abandon feminism's traditional challenge to the Western narrative of war and politics, and women's relationship to both. Ignoring for the moment the dangers for feminism of being drawn into neo-Hobbesian political philosophy, what does this all mean in practice? Should women in the 1970s have demanded to be selected as pilots for the carpet-bombing of Hanoi? Should they have volunteered for providing ground support for the 'Contras' in Nicaragua in the 1980s? Should they have demanded to participate in CIA operations (including the torture of young women activists) in Latin America whose purpose was to contain leftist dissent? Such questions demand either simple and brutal answers (Yes, they should!) or an understanding that wars and other struggles must be historically differentiated—that participation may be an act of complicity in barbarism or an inevitability as occasioned by civil war, for example.

42

In the 1970s and 1990s, the Greek government issued plans to introduce compulsory military conscription for women, exempting only those with small children. The message sent to women was to 'bear babies or bear arms'. The political rationale for this initiative lay in nationalist concerns about Turkey, which prevailed during the period, as well as in the long-standing concerns about the 'demographic problem' given the low birth rate in Greece. It also served to illuminate the social role of the military as the last, intact bastion of patriarchal power, which actively perpetuated the segregation of the public and private spheres. As these lines are written, the Greek statute specifies that all Greek women must report for seven days of every year for military training, even if no woman has been called to enlist even for a single day since the legislation was passed. It seems unlikely that the legislation will ever be enforced given the primarily symbolic significance of it, but it is the response of Greek women in general and feminists in particular to the legislation that is pertinent. Most women rejected the legislation using an argument that fused the Just War/Beautiful Soul paradigms, a hybrid model of (Greek) femininity which was first utilised by Greek feminists in the nineteenth century—in the pages of *The Ladies' Newspaper*.

43

This peculiarity of Greek feminist discourse draws attention to the importance of context. The question must be asked as to what role Bouboulina played for Parren, and what role did the Greek Resistance fighters of the 1940s play for post-war feminist movements? Was it a radically different role than that of the image of a female US Marine during the Gulf War?

44

Greek feminist formulations of Just War theory cast a light on the cultural and political importance of local experience—in this case the experience of conflict. In Greece, as in other countries which have produced alternative feminist views of the women, war, and citizenship nexus, the political culture has been shaped by a long history of occupation, dictatorship, and civil conflict.

In this chapter, I have emphasised the importance of national specificities in shaping feminist perspectives on the relationship between women and war while simultaneously drawing attention to the widespread influence of the Just Warrior/Moral Mother/Beautiful Soul paradigm across the spectrum of feminist discursive traditions, albeit interpreted in diverse ways and to varying degrees, across time and space. The two most dominant strands in contemporary feminist theory vis-à-vis war, militarism, and women have both their 'Machiavellian' moments and their 'Beautiful Soul' reiterations and both share a totalising tendency: women must be engaged in all (men's) wars as equal defenders/warriors, or, all war is bad and women must struggle for world peace and total disarmament. The experience of women involved in national liberation struggles or in resistance against oppressive regimes cannot be accounted for or understood within this framework. It does not allow for a meaningful interpretation, for example, of Nicaraguan women's enlistment in the Sandinista movement, because, as mothers, they could no longer stand by and watch the violence committed against their children by the Somoza regime (see Molyneaux, 1985: 228). 45

At the same time, the all-encompassing nature of national liberation conflicts, in which the home, the street, the village square, and the town are engulfed by war, has rendered the distinctions between private and public space meaningless and, by default, has in many instances liberated women, at least for the duration of the war, from their prescribed role within the private domain. This blurring of divisions has at times presented opportunities for a redefinition of gender roles and identities, although the relationship between emancipatory politics and nationalism has been a precarious one, as historians have convincingly argued and as I will discuss in subsequent chapters on the Second World War. 46

In the next chapter, I shall examine the ways in which nineteenth-century feminists in Greece utilised the iconography of war, particularly the imagery of Greek women in arms and particularly from the 1821 Revolution, to legitimate the integration of women into the new nation. Parren's ambition to include women in the national narratives—which so defined the era—marked the first of many historical junctures in which the woman question would find expression and legitimacy in the context of progressive formulations of Greek nationalism. The era also witnessed the first attempt to construct a prototype of Greek womanhood, particular to Greek feminism, which reconciled the Moral Mother and Just Warrior constructs of Western philosophy and which would resurface sporadically throughout the feminist discourses of the next century. 47

## Notes

**Note 1:** The term originates with Ruth Bloch (1978: 101–26).

**Note 2:** These categories inform the body of Elshtain's considerable work, but are central themes in Elshtain (1992, 1993, and 1995).

**Note 3:** See for example Howe (1995).

**Note 4:** See Shover (1975).

**Note 5:** The plays of Aristophanes, in which women play leading anti-war roles by challenging male authority on ethical (but also pragmatic) grounds, are a case in point.

**Note 6:** Women are the Beautiful Soul, men are the Just Warriors.

**Note 7:** See Elshtain (1996).

**Note 8:** This is not always true, of course. Notable exceptions are the figures of Medea, Clytemnestra, and Lady Macbeth.

**Note 9:** The story and myth of Bouboulina travelled beyond the Greek areas of the Ottoman Empire primarily through her interaction with foreign visitors, travellers, and philhellenes from Britain, France, and Russia, and also through her own travels for reasons of trade. See, for example, Tennent, Pecchio, & Humphreys (1826).

**Note 10:** Woolf's attitudes towards women, war, and peace are surveyed in the work of Ruth Roach Pierson (1987, 1988, 1989). See also Zwerdling (1987); Clewell (2004); Boxwell (1993); Gilbert (1983); Cooper, Munich, & Squier (Eds.) (1989); Silver (1991); and Elshtain & Tobias (Eds.) (1990).

**Note 11:** See Elshtain (2002a, 2002b).

**Note 12:** Damousi and Lake (1995) ask the interesting question: Does historical agency transform gender ideology or is the pre-eminent subject of national history necessarily masculine, regardless of who does the warring? They note that the Australian anti-Vietnam war movement was a testament to the gendering of war-related discourse when male protesters, conscientious objectors, and draft resisters claimed the heroic warrior status from both the soldiers and the women pacifists.

**Note 13:** Italian, German, and Bulgarian occupying forces.

**Note 14:** *Panagia* is the Greek word for Madonna and means, literally, the 'All-Holy'.

**Note 15:** For example, the 1821 Greek Revolution; the Greek National Resistance; Spain in the 1930s; Vietnam in the 1950s and 1960s; Nicaragua and San Salvador in the 1980s; Polisario in the 1970s; and Myanmar and Sri Lanka to this day.

**Note 16:** Indeed, according to Hegel, war was the only way to achieve nationhood, as it alone could draw together as a collective identity the disparate, self-absorbed (male) individuals of modern bourgeois society. In Hegel, just as the individual emerges to self-conscious identity through struggle, so each state must struggle to attain recognition. The proclamation of independence is deemed insufficient, so war is the means to attain this recognition; to pass in a sense the definitive test of political manhood. Hence, a state is free to the extent that it can defend itself, gain the recognition of others, and shore up an acknowledged state identity.

**Note 17:** A point originally made by Tony Benn, British MP.