

Banana, Beaches, and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics (Cynthia Enloe)

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Enloe, Cynthia. Banana, Beaches, and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics. University of California Press, 2014.

Cynthia Enloe is one of the most prominent names in the feminist world. She is known for her work on Gender and Militarism. 'Bananas, Beaches and Bases' is the prime example of this theme. The work in this book deals with the basic activities of life that are ignored and considered to be gender-neutral, while the author observed a different aspect of her gender bias in these activities. The title of the book is initially, astonishing to the reader, but as the reader proceeds, the title is justified in the text as the work highly focuses on the plantation workers near the beach and the sex workers' struggle during the Korean War. Enloe used simple language while explaining the masculine nature present in the small events of life with appropriate examples with every comment on the patriarchal practices. The author has expertise in the writing of women's perspectives and defending all truthful circumstances. Enloe criticised how feminist work is ignored in mainstream literature.

The prominent question raised by the author in the book is '**Where are the women?**' which forms the base of challenging the mainstream theories of international relations. Cynthia Enloe gave one of the most influential statements in the conclusion of the book "**The Personal is International**".

This book can be considered a guide for feminists. It is wisely divided into chapters with meaningful titles. The author showed the disregard faced by the women plantation workers as their

work is contemplated as informal and less important. There is connectivity established between the small aspects of life by the author to prove gender obscurity in the principal concepts of their society.

Nationalism and masculinity are described from the alternate observatory of a woman and how a woman relates to the national movements in various parts of the world. The conventional thought process is intelligently questioned by the author by pointing out the four major aspects like a crisis, development, stability and most important security. The patriarchal ideas are challenged by the author as well as the speed of the acceptance of feminist ideas is evaluated as problematic for gender equality.

A phenomenon like nationalism, which is considered to be equal for both genders, is criticised to be masculine by putting the feminine side of war and putting the suffering of women during the war light by the author. She presented the idea that **patriarchy is adaptive** which makes it more enduring in society for years. Such as masculinity is considered modern and strong on the other hand feminine ideas are considered to be weak and traditional that's why should consider subordinate to masculinity.

The important work highlighted by the author is the two case studies - The Trans-Atlantic Anti-Slavery Movement, and The International Arms Trade Treaty. She pointed out that the gendered nature of the policies in international eventually perpetuates the violence.

The author used unconventional examples of women workers to convey their perspectives. Work done by women is always considered informal and unimportant in the world's eye hence, the material value is reduced as compared to men. The impact of mainstream capitalism is also observed in this phenomenon. A pictorial representation of the examples is noticed on the front cover of the book. The women in beautiful attire with a combination of fruits, it's quite a common comment beautiful but the author points out how the company executives used women's logos to appeal to the customers.

Even inside the book, there is an essential factor showing that women are considered as subordinate gender in politics and decision making as their presence in politics is just appeared as a wife of a certain personality, not a decision maker independently. A few women have shown their presence on international platforms as strong leaders and politicians as Hillary Clinton, Mary Robinson, Angela Merkel etc. But these are just a few names whereas according to feminist researchers, there are several women involved in political reforms.

Though the examples are used from South Asia and the third world, the evaluation is still done based on eurocentrism and western thought. In present days when we are witnessing IR theories from different parts of the world, it's now questionable to centre the argument based on the West only. But still, it is a good read for a feminist school and to deal more about the feminist school. As well as the best and most appropriate read for beginners who wants to read about feminist thought. This work exactly defined how politics is used and how politics uses people to define its aims

Cynthia Enloe came up with new knowledge as she was challenging the existing knowledge about the notion of power and questioned the national security issues as a whole and put new concepts of what is security as a reference object instead of the state.