



SAARA SÄRMÄ

# Junk Feminism and Nuclear Wannabes

Collaging Parodies of Iran and North Korea



ACADEMIC DISSERTATION

To be presented, with the permission of  
the Board of the School of Management of the University of Tampere,  
for public discussion in the Auditorium Pinni B 1100 of the University,  
Kanslerinrinne 1, Tampere,  
on September 5th, 2014, at 12 o'clock.

UNIVERSITY OF TAMPERE

SAARA SÄRMÄ

Junk Feminism and Nuclear Wannabes

Collaging Parodies of Iran and North Korea

*Acta Universitatis Tamperensis 1961*  
*Tampere University Press*  
*Tampere 2014*

ACADEMIC DISSERTATION  
School of Management  
Finland

Copyright ©2014 Tampere University Press and the author

Cover design by  
Mikko Reinikka

Distributor:  
[kirjamyynti@juvenes.fi](mailto:kirjamyynti@juvenes.fi)  
<http://granum.uta.fi>

Acta Universitatis Tamperensis 1961  
ISBN 978-951-44-9534-2 (print)  
ISSN-L 1455-1616  
ISSN 1455-1616

Acta Electronica Universitatis Tamperensis 1446  
ISBN 978-951-44-9535-9 (pdf)  
ISSN 1456-954X  
<http://tampub.uta.fi>

Suomen Yliopistopaino Oy – Juvenes Print  
Tampere 2014



# Acknowledgements

The journey that has led to completion of this doctoral dissertation has been a long one. Along the way, many people have helped me, knowingly and unknowingly, to walk unafraid. One of this work's many points of origins was in the fall of 1998 when I started my undergrad degree in Tampere. At the intro course, Osmo Apunen drew upper case IR and lower case i.r. onto the blackboard and I struggled to understand the difference. Little did I know how significant those two pairs of letters and their relationship would become in my life. I sincerely hope this dissertation does justice to the old Tampere school of IR!

From the bottom of my heart, I would like to thank the two pre-examiners Christine Sylvester and Julian Reid, who approved this dissertation for publication, and Marysia Zalewski, who agreed to be my opponent at the public defense. It is such an honor and a privilege have three amazing, sharp, and creative thinkers to read my work and comment on it. Christine, you have been a huge inspiration and influence on my studies ever since I took a week off from my summer job at a food factory in 2000 to attend her summer school lectures in the old Attila building. Your pre-examination report not only helped me to improve this manuscript, but also will be ever so useful for the future iterations of this project. Julian, thank you so much for your generosity as a pre-examiner, and in many other occasions as well. Many discussions in seminars and elsewhere, in Minneapolis, Rovaniemi, and Tampere, have been beneficial and always enjoyable. I hope there will be many more to come. Or, we can just sit in silence and enjoy the no-more-than-14-euros-per-bottle wine.

This work would never have started, let alone finished, if it wasn't for my wonderful advisors Mika Aaltola and Elina Penttinen, who have believed in my abilities way before than I did, and a lot more. Both of you are so super, but the anti-hierarchist in me refuses to name you supervisors, you both have been so much more. Mika, if you constantly hadn't pushed me to be more courageous I would've never ever have the nerve to do what I ended up doing. Thank you so much for always having faith in me, thank you for taking me on as an integral part of 'Team Aaltola', for taking the team to many places, and for fantastic seminar and post-seminar sessions. Finally,

thank you for the many awesome and amazingly metaphorical advisory text messages. There, indeed, is space on the outer spheres of atoms for the electrons to roam freely. Elina, your role in the last stretches of this journey has been enormous, your careful reading and commenting, and your always enthusiastic and positive take on research and life, have meant the world to me. You are a star, which radiates loving-kindness! I owe you both more gratitude than any words can express.

My two closest fellow travelers, Riina Yrjölä and Jemima Repo, you've been such a big help, an inspiration, and a support system throughout this process that it is impossible to describe how much it has meant to me. You've always been there, sharing the joys and the angsts of this process, making the good bits more pleasurable and the nasty bits bearable. Thank you for your friendship and caring, and thank you both for showing me this can be done. Viva forever!

Huge thanks for countless hours of seminar and post-seminar discussions go to Team Aaltola+: Juha Käpylä, Harri Mikkola, Noora Kotilainen, Denis Kennedy, Valtteri Vuorisalo, Jarmila Rajas, and Ari-Elmeri Hyvönen. Cheers!

I want to thank Tuomas Forsberg for agreeing to be the custos at the defense, and more importantly, for making sure it is financially possible for me to finish this work. Thank you, Hanna Ojanen, for being a member of my dissertation evaluation committee. I'm also so very thankful to Bud Duvall, who made it possible for me and the rest of Team Aaltola to spend time at the University of Minnesota.

I would like to thank the Academy; I've received funding from two Academy of Finland funded projects: Ethics, Politics, and Emergencies (128627) and Emotions in Russian Foreign Policy (138728); and Finnish Graduate School in Political Studies (POLITU). The former Department of Political Science and International Relations and the current School of Management at the University of Tampere have also funded my work.

One of the most enjoyable parts of academic life are the people I've gotten to know over the years. Relations international of IR at its best! Bear hugs to the most awesome Xavier Guillaume and the two other colorific dudes Juha Vuori and Rune Saugmann Andersen. Many thanks to my new academic kindred spirits Kathleen Brennan and Caitlin Hamilton; I really appreciate your willingness to share your work with me and look forward to many memetastic conversations. Special thanks for good times to the Minnesota crew, including Asli Calkivik, Jonneke Koomen, Susan

Kang, Ralitsa Donkova, and Isaac Kamola. The FTGS (Feminist Theory and Gender Studies section) of the ISA (International Studies Association) has been such a warm and encouraging space, I'm so grateful for all the much needed support I've received in person and online from Laura Shepherd, Swati Parashar, Annick Wibben, Cai Wilkinson, Laura McLeod, Megan MacKenzie, Jenny Lobasz, Katherine Brown, and Catia Cecilia Confortini. Ronni Alexander, your kind words in Toronto this year have been echoing in my mind as I've been doing the revisions. Shine Choi, Erzsebet Strausz, and Megan Daigle, I'm excitedly looking forward to further discussions and new collaborations. Another wonderful space have been the PCWP (Popular Culture and World Politics) conferences, workshops and panels. Matt Davies, Kyle Grayson, and Simon Philpott, thank you for everything! Mark Salter, thank you for a wonderful pep talk in Rovaniemi. Many thanks also to Lori Crowe, Chris Hendershot, Derek Maisonville, and Jennifer Skulte. Thank you Thomas Moore for always being ready to share important experiences such as the ABBA museum. I've also received wonderful support and comments on various papers from Colleen Bell, Mika Luoma-aho, Aini Linjakumpu, Laura Junka-Aikio, Antti Aikio, and Geoffrey Whitehall. Thank you all! Tiina Seppälä, thank you for your many encouraging and inspiring comments at various seminars, and especially after reading the whole manuscript. My heartfelt thanks for the professionalism and generosity with which Fred Chernoff, Lene Hansen, and Michael Shapiro have engaged with my work. I've only had brief encounters with Carol Cohn and Cynthia Enloe, but they have left a lasting mark in me. Thank you both for your kindness and for the never-ending inspiration your work provides to me, and so many others!

I've been fortunate to be surrounded by wonderful people at work throughout this process. Some have been there from before I ever even imagined doing a doctoral dissertation, others I'm just getting to know. I would like to sincerely thank the following people for warm collegiality and many encouraging words: Anni Kangas, Sirke Mäkinen, Maija Mattila, Tapio Juntunen, Tapani Turkka, Elina Kestilä-Kekkonen, and Eero Palmujoki. Very special thanks goes to Tarja Seppä. No words are enough to describe how important you have been, first as a teacher, later as a mentor and colleague. You're such a caring and considerate soul. I so admire your commitment to the quality of teaching and to the general well-being of all of us.

I'm indebted to Helena Rytövuori-Apunen, Jyrki Käkönen, and Vilho Harle. Helena played a significant role in how I became part of the department in the first place. While working together, I gained a lot of valuable experience on administrative duties

and lot of knowledge on how power works in the academic everyday. Jyrki made it possible for me to take on a dissertation project. Financial matters were of course a significant help, but also your way of gently kicking me forward and many interesting conversations have been a treasure. Ville, your comments and encouragement in and out of seminar rooms, your role as an editor in the Global and Regional Problems book, and your explicit faith in my abilities (even when you didn't quite get what I was trying to do) have been so very helpful. Warm thanks to you all.

Tampere IR grad students who attended Ville's seminars with me, Anna-Riitta Salomäki, Heikki Sirviö, Jaakko Ailio, Tytti Erästö, Helle Palu, and Jan Hanska, thank you so much for many discussions and immeasurable peer support.

Of other colleagues and academics friends, I would especially like to acknowledge feminist scholars: Riikka Homanen, Inari Aaltojärvi, Jiri Nieminen, Leena Kotilainen, Marjaana Jauhola, Eeva Puumala, Anitta Kynsilehto, Tiina Vaittinen, Cristian Norocel, Tarja Väyrynen, Johanna Kantola, Jaana Kuusipalo, Anne Koski, Marjo Kolehmainen, Suvi Ronkainen, Päivi Korvajärvi, Jaana Vuori, Kirsti Lempiäinen, Minna Nikunen, and Sari Irni. Thank you for doing what you all do. Thank you for many many formal and informal discussions, thank you for all the inspiration and support you've provided. Riikka, fetuses and nukes projects awaits!

Furthermore, in the Finnish IR community I'd like to thank Minna Jokela for many laughs and fruitful brainstormings and Katri Pynnöniemi for sharing bits and pieces of this journey all the way from those early days at kuvis to the new fiction and foreign policy reading group. Who would've thought that this is how our lives intertwine.

The university administrative staff serves a crucial, yet often unrecognized role, in allowing us to do what we do least painfully, thus I would like to thank Riitta Lehtimäki for the countless times and hours you've helped me with various things. Lately, Mirja Björk, Sari Saastamoinen, and Anu Kostainen have also helped me a great deal. So, thank you all! Special thanks to Minna Höijer, a fellow cat-lover for a mutually beneficial cat-sitting deal and many enthusiastic cat-loving conversations.

Special thanks also to Sinikka Torkkola and the people involved in TATTE, who all try their damnest to make university life better and more endurable.

There is so much to life before and beyond academia, of course. Without Pirkko Kuusela's gentle and superb art teaching skills way back at Forssan Kuvataidekoulu, this work would never have become what it is. You instilled in me courage to try to work with different techniques and materials, even when I didn't think I could make art. My warmest thanks.

Very many special thanks to all the members of the best pub quiz team, the most fantastic and persistent midsummer picnic group, and the one and only Sorsapuiston Syväkyykkyseura. Kimmo, so much thanks for the help with the pictures. Veikko, thank you for your art related help. Anis, words fail me, but you know, thank you for always letting me be however silly and ridiculous I need to be and for never judging me for it. Tomi Palsa, thank you for being my guide to music for 20 years and for teaching me a thing or two about laughter, too. It's humor! Anukaisa, my café writing companion, by just being there you've made this process so much more painless. I've also learned from you more than you will ever know. Bobby Vitale, thank you for your hospitality. Thanks also to Rapa, Tiia, Kata, Minttu, Menna, Pyge, Nea, and Riikka; Teemu, Johanna, Topias, and Telma. You all have grounded me, and given me a sense that I know where I belong. Your hearts are true. Thank you for being a friend!

Finally, my families have made me what I am today and have, in so many ways, made this work possible. Maija Ollikainen, Heikki Ollikainen and Katri Kananen, Janet Smith, Carissa Morales, Ian Nieves, and Ginger Lawrence thank you for all your love, care, and nurture over the years. Seppo Säämäki, there will never be enough words and ways to thank you for all the love, emotional and practical support you've given me in the last 3 years. Life is better with you! Edward von Meowngton, thank you for letting me live with you. I would also like to remember three special men: Hannes Mero, Jack Lawrence, and Manuel Nieves. I wish you'd been here to see this.

I dedicate this book to Ronja and all my other little friends – for your sake, I hope my meager efforts to better the world makes a difference!

In Tampere, after a weekend of much pride and love, in chilly June 2014,

Saara Särmä



# Abstract

Nuclear weapons have been a great source of intense negative sentiments, mainly fear, over the past 70 years. The intensity of these sentiments has fluctuated over the decades as the relative positions of and the relations between nuclear weapons states have shifted and changed. This doctoral dissertation deals with a different register of sentiments, equally familiar, but not often associated with the issue. It turns to sentiments that are more positive and examines laughter's role in world politics. It focuses on the actors located at the bottom of the global nuclear order, namely *nuclear wannabes*. The global nuclear order is a hierarchy institutionalized in the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, which divides the world into nuclear haves and have-nots. Nuclear wannabes are those states that want to move from have-not to have by acquiring nuclear arsenals, i.e. Iran and North Korea.

The dissertation explores (loosely western) *everyday understandings* of nuclear wannabes and argues that the global nuclear order is reproduced in humorous everyday representations of these states. It takes the internet and social media seriously as sites where everyday understandings are constituted. It argues that the knowledges produced in and through the internet are increasingly anecdotal and fragmented, and that humor and laughter play a role in the knowledge production and circulation. It looks at how laughter at actors depicted in internet parodies orders the global nuclear hierarchy, in particular, and orders the international more broadly. Furthermore, it examines the boundary conditions created by this laughter.

The work situates theoretically in the transdisciplinary field of Feminist International Relations and sees gender as relational, performative, and hierarchical. To engage with the fragmented mode of knowledge and random collection of "stuff" (research material) an art based methodology is developed. *Junk feminist collaging* experiments with a playful mode of doing research, which advocates for openness and creativity in research; for modes of writing and expression that disrupt the hierarchical relationship with the author and the reader; and for doing research by making art.

The collages created during the research process and presented as part of this dissertation are a unique intervention. This intervention challenges the priority of text over images in conventional academic modes of presenting research and invites the reader/viewer to participate actively in meaning making. The collages visualize the ways in which nuclear wannabes are gendered and sexualized, as these processes are central to the creation, recreation and maintenance of the hierarchical international order.

# Tiivistelmä

Viimeisten 70 vuoden aikana ydinaseet ovat herättäneet (monia) negatiivisia tunteita, pääosin pelkoa. Tunteiden voimakkuus on vaihdellut riippuen maailmanpoliittisesta tilanteesta ja valtioiden keskinäisistä suhteista. Tämä väitöskirja käsittelee toisenlaisia, positiivisia tuntemuksia, joita ei yleensä liitetä ydinasevarusteluun. Toisin sanoen tutkimus käsittelee naurun roolia maailmanpolitiikassa ja keskittyy eräässä kansainvälisessä arvojärjestyksessä alimmaisena sijaitseviin toimijoihin. Tämä kansainvälinen arvojärjestys, globaali ydinasejärjestys, on institutionalisoitu ydinsulkusopimuksessa, joka jakaa maailman valtiot niihin, joilla on ydinase, ja niihin, joilla ei ole. Ydinasevalloiksi pyrkiviä Irania ja Pohjois-Koreaa kutsutaan tutkimuksessa *ydinasetyrkyiksi* (nuclear wannabes).

Tutkimus kartoittaa läntisiä (löyhästi ymmärrettynä) jokapäiväisiä käsityksiä ydinasetyrkyistä ja osoittaa, että globaalia ydinasejärjestystä tuotetaan jatkuvasti myös humoristisissa materiaaleissa, kuten erilaisissa pilakuvissa. Tutkimuksessa käytetty materiaali on peräisin internetistä ja sosiaalisesta mediasta, joissa pilakuvia julkaistaan ja jaetaan paljon. Naurun ja huumorin nähdään tutkimuksessa liittyvän siihen, millaiset materiaalit internetissä kiertävät ja kuinka nopeasti. Tämän seurauksena internetissä tuotettu tieto on enenevässä määrin sirpaloitunutta ja anekdoottimaista. Ydinasetyrkkijien naurettavuus, jota pilakuvissa esitetään, tuottaa globaalia ydinasejärjestystä yhä uudelleen. Irvailu ydinasetyrkyille tuottaa myös rajanvetoja, joissa määrittyy ketkä kuuluvat kansainvälisen yhteisön tai jopa ihmiskunnan piiriin.

Teoreettisesti tutkimus sijoittuu kansainvälisen politiikan tutkimuksen feministiseen poikkitieteelliseen kenttään ja käsitteellistä sukupuolen suhteellisenä, performativisena ja hierarkkisena. Jotta tutkimuksessa pystytään käsittelemään internet-aineistojen sattumanvaraisuutta ja tiedon sirpaloitumista, on kehitetty kuvataiteesta ammentava metodologinen lähestymistapa: *feministinen kollaasimetodologia*. Kollaasimetodologia on leikkisä tutkimuksen tekemisen tapa, joka pyrkii edistämään luovuutta ja kokeilevuutta. Kokeileva kirjoittamisen tapa ja kuvataiteen tekeminen osana tutkimusprosessia haastavat perinteisiä tieteellisen ilmaisun tapoja ja purkavat hierarkkista suhdetta tutkijan ja lukijan väliltä.

Tutkimusprosessissa tehdyt kollaasit tuottavat kuvalliseen muotoon tutkimustekstin teemoja, siitä miten ydinasetykkyä sukupuolitetaan ja seksualisoidaan jokapäiväisillä tavoilla. Kollaasit kyseenalaistavat tavanomaisen tekstin ensisijaisuuden suhteessa kuviin ja kutsuvat lukija-katsojan osallistumaan aktiivisesti merkitysten tuottamiseen.

# Contents

1	Introduction .....	15
2	Disciplinarity and beyond .....	22
2.1	IR feminisms as a transdisciplinary collage .....	25
2.2	Why feminism and not just gender? .....	28
2.3	Brief histories of IR/feminism mutual encounters.....	32
2.4	Towards camping up IR feminisms.....	37
2.5	Being a junk feminist / junk feminist being.....	40
3	Junk feminism.....	45
3.1	A feminist approach to nuclear proliferation.....	45
3.2	A junk feminist approach to nuclear proliferation.....	49
3.3	Theoretical positionings part 1: gender as hierarchical and performative .....	59
3.4	Theoretical positionings part 2: popular culture and world politics (PCWP) .....	64
3.5	Theoretical positionings part 3: Laughter as a political sentiment .....	70
4	Methodological collage - collaging as methodology .....	76
4.1	Theoretical collaging.....	79
4.2	Collage as a mode of writing / writing as a methodology .....	83
4.3	Thematic collaging.....	87

4.4	Visual collaging .....	88
4.5	Description of the process of collaging when making actual pieces of art .....	90
4.6	Collaging is for everyone.....	96
4.7	Data collection on the internet .....	98
5	Wannabe 1 - North Korea .....	102
5.1	Figures of Kim Jong-il and anecdotality.....	103
5.2	Kim Jong (Mentally) Ill - it's a thin line between a mastermind and crazy guy.....	105
5.3	Nuke Kid - childish and misbehaving prankster.....	109
5.4	Lonely geek craving for love and attention.....	113
5.5	Kims as celebrity-like characters.....	118
5.6	Luxurious Kims .....	121
6	Wannabe 2 - Iran and photoshopped missiles .....	127
6.1	Setting the Stage: Parodying Iran's Photoshopped Missile .....	129
6.2	Failures and alternatives .....	132
6.3	Excessive Masculinity .....	133
6.4	Feminizations .....	137
6.5	Missile envy.....	141
6.6	Viagra politics.....	145
7	Global nuclear hierarchy, regimes of laughter and limits of compassion .....	150
7.1	Humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons and anti-nuclear campaigning.....	152

7.2	(In)visibility of suffering .....	155
7.3	Celebrity politics: Rodman's trips to North Korea.....	159
7.4	How hair became a human right issue .....	162
7.5	Why do we laugh when North Koreans cry?.....	166
8	Afterword .....	171
8.1	Left out story that wanted to be told.....	171
8.2	By way of conclusions.....	174
	 Bibliography.....	 183

# 1 Introduction

Nuclear weapons and the idea of proliferation have been source of intense negative sentiments, mainly fear, over the past 70 years. The intensity of these sentiments has fluctuated over the decades as the relative positions of and the relations between nuclear weapons states have shifted and changed. Each of us surely has various memories and stories relating to these sentiments, however this doctoral dissertation deals with a different register of sentiments, equally familiar, but not often associated with the issue of nuclear weapons and proliferation. In this doctoral dissertation, I turn to sentiments that are more positive and examine laughter's role in world politics.

This research project is about our *everyday understandings of nuclear proliferation*. The “we” in this is loosely understood western public, which observes and spectates world political events through various media: conventional mass media and increasingly on and through the internet. Many of us also participate from afar in various world political events as they unfold. This distant participation happens by commenting, sharing links and images on social media (blogs, Facebook, Twitter) and it creates a sense of being part of something in the moment it happens. Our understandings of world political events are shaped by this distant participation. Think of the Arab Spring, for example, and how it has been dubbed a social media revolution partly because an active western social media participation, while on the ground phone calls and texting served much more significant role than Facebook and Twitter (cf. Schielke 2011). In other words, we like to call it a social media revolution precisely because these type of media allowed us to feel like we were a part of the events in new ways.

Public discussions of nuclear proliferation often circulate around what I call the *nuclear wannabes*, i.e. new states that have demonstrated aspirations to build nuclear arsenals. These states are “new” in contrast with the “old” nuclear states who already have significant arsenals, which mostly remain invisible and unproblematic in public discussions. The global nuclear order is institutionalized in the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), which divides states into haves and have-nots. The



haves are the old nuclear states, i.e the nuclear club and the rest of the world falls into the latter category, while the wannabes fall somewhere in between the two categories, wanting to change their status.

The nuclear wannabes in this case are North Korea and Iran, the two states that are commonly seen as the most problematic world political actors in this regard. For me, the central problem of this study is not these two ‘rogue’ states (cf. Choi 2013: 1-2), but rather the particular way that we understand and look at them.

One of the things that brought me to laughter vis-à-vis these two nuclear wannabes is the speed of the circulation of ‘stuff’ (images and anecdotes) in the internet era. Because everything circulates so fast and memes are born instantaneously we sometimes come by a parody first and then find out what actually happened. For example, in 2011 there was a meme of “the pepper spray cop” where an image of a police officer spraying pepper spray was inserted in various classic art works and other images.<sup>1</sup> I at least, happened to see the meme images before finding out about the incident where the police officer pepper-sprayed protesters at an Occupy movement demonstration at UC Davis. To figure out what had actually happened to prompt the meme I actively had to do an internet search.

The point I’m making here is that what we know about world politics on the everyday level, in this internet age, is increasingly anecdotal and accidental. The internet is a specific modality of knowledge; it is quite random and very fragmented. Hence, when lot of us spend a significant part of our days connected to the world via our computers and smart phones following and/or participating in social media, our knowledge of many things remains fragmented if we do not actively search for more information. Furthermore, we tend to share, for example on Facebook, things which are funny or outrageous, or both at the same time. Because humor and laughter play a role in the circulation process (what is shared, how much, and how fast), parodies can sometimes remain our sole connection to an event or issue.

Thus, the parody images under examination here cannot be divorced from “real life”. On the contrary, even though online things, happenings and encounters are described so often as separate from things that happen IRL (in real life), they actually, in very tangible ways, constitute our everyday understandings of the international

---

<sup>1</sup> See a collection of images: <http://peppersprayingcop.tumblr.com/>

and our engagements with various things that we associate as belonging to the realm of the international.

In this research project, I address a topic that conventionally locates at the very core of the international. That is to say, as an ultimate security concern nuclear weaponry and proliferation are issues of the highest international politics, even today when they have receded mainly onto the background and rarely feature visibly on the global agendas, that is, rarely in comparison to some other previous decades. The issue itself has not gone anywhere, but there often seems to be so many more pressing matters to discuss these days.

Nuclear weapons, proliferation, and nuclear wannabes Iran and North Korea are the usual suspects and “international relations where it is expected to be” (Sylvester 2007a: 551), thus my work is anchored in the academic discipline of International Relations (IR). However, because the ways of going about the research project are not as usual the more specific locations of IR this study situates in are IR feminisms and Popular Culture and World Politics (PCWP). IR theories and questions have conventionally been framed in such a way that humor and laughter have not registered as parts of the issues pertinent to the discipline. Due to the fairly recent interventions into the discipline that have brought in aesthetics and popular culture, new kinds of avenues of inquiry have opened up and this has made it possible to look at the role of humor and laughter in world politics more closely.

The questions that are at the heart of this research project are:

*What work are ideas about gender (masculinities and femininities) and sexuality doing in parody representations of nuclear wannabes?*

*How does laughter, which arises from these parodies, frame and constitute the relations of “us” and “them”, of I (we) and the Other(s)?*

*How does laughter order the international especially in our, western, everyday understandings?*

*What kind of boundary conditions does laughter create?*

By ordering I mean, in this context, both upholding the current hierarchies and disrupting them, as disrupting can always suggest a new kind of order/hierarchy.

The answers I have gathered to these broad questions are multiple and together they form a multilayered collage consisting of scholarly-textual and artistic-visual works.

My engagement and experimentation with art inspired research methodology - junk feminist collaging - arises from the desire to

“counteract the hegemony and linearity in written text, increase voice and reflexivity in the research process, and expand the possibilities of multiple and diverse realities and understandings. The search for more embodied and alternative representational forms where meaning is understood to be a construction of what the text represents and what the reader/viewer brings to it, and the realization that we live in an increasingly visual/nonlinear world” (Butler-Kisber 2008: 268).

In other words, this doctoral dissertation as a whole can be approached as a collage-like entity, in which I have attempted, on the one hand, to stay within the boundaries of what a dissertation should be and how it should be structured while on the other hand challenging and disrupting some of those boundaries.

What drives my work is an attitude towards research, and life itself, and it can be captured in the concept of *feminist curiosity* coined by Cynthia Enloe (e.g. 2004; 2007a; 2007b). Through feminist curiosity, what is taken as normal or natural can be made strange and connections between gendered cultural logics and power structures and everyday practices and experiences can be made, thus enabling people to make better sense of their life and the world (cf. Kronsell 2006: 127). In other words, it means being curious about the concept, nature, and practices of gender (Zalewski 1995: 341) and it “questions the ways in which gender is made meaningful in social/political interactions and the practices—or performances—through which gender configures boundaries of subjectivity” (Shepherd 2007: 241).

The specific version of feminist curiosity that I have developed for and in this project is a theoretical and methodological approach I have named *junk feminist collaging* and it will be discussed in detail in the next three chapters.

Shortly, collages and collaging works as a metaphor for both the structure of this doctoral dissertation as a whole and the transdisciplinary field of IR feminisms. Furthermore, collaging works in several ways:

As *creativity* – allows for the humorous approach advocated by junk feminism.

As *epistemology* – engagement with fragmented ways of knowing and scrappy research material.

As *de-hierarchalization* – experimental writing style that aims to destabilize the conventional relationship between the writer and reader (/viewer).

As *methodology* – art making as visual mode of thinking and presenting research.

In chapter two, I build the background for my junk feminist approach by engaging in disciplinary discussions and suggesting a move beyond the usual mainstream vs. feminist IR debates that have been ongoing for the last few decades. While I could have skipped this step and moved on with the work itself as many feminist scholars do these days, I find it important in terms of both framing the contributions I want to make and in terms of examining power and privilege in the everyday. The importance of the disciplinary discussion arises from the need to challenge our “trained incapacities” (cf. Shapiro 2013) which uphold the structures that keep us uncurious about many things. This, too, draws from the notion of feminist curiosity, as it drives feminists in IR to construct a dual research agenda and to investigate disciplinarity and the limits and boundaries of IR often side by side with the theoretical and empirical work. Cynthia Enloe describes how becoming curious works:

“The moment when one becomes newly curious about something is also a good time to think about what created one’s previous *lack* of curiosity. So many power structures – inside house-holds, within institutions, in societies, in international affairs – are dependent on our continuing lack of curiosity. ‘Natural’, ‘tradition’, ‘always’: each has served as a cultural pillar to prop up familial, community, national, and international power structures, imbuing them with legitimacy, with timelessness, with inevitability. Any power arrangement that is imagined to be legitimate, timeless, and inevitable is pretty well fortified. Thus we need to stop and scrutinize our lack of curiosity. We also need to be genuinely curious about others’ lack of curiosity – not for the sake of feeling self-satisfied, but for the sake of meaningfully engaging with those who take any power structure as unproblematic.” (2004: 2-3, emphasis in original).

To get beyond disciplinarity, I first situate my work within the discipline of IR through a discussion of various feminist approaches and then argue for an understanding that sees IR itself as much as an identity and -ism as feminism is usually seen. This juxtaposition of -isms helps us to recognize the emotionality involved in disciplinarity and open space for a more playful and joyful way of doing research and being an academic.

In chapter three, then, I get into what this more playful and joyful way of doing research means theoretically in this specific piece of work. I locate my normative position in the tradition of anti-war feminism, which is an approach previous feminist scholars of nuclear proliferation have developed and adopted. This approach is critical of the reliance of *any state* on nuclear weaponry and it is critical of militarism more generally. The chapter in itself forms a sort of collage that juxtaposes and brings together various theoretical strands drawing from different, always already transdisciplinary, genres of scholarship.

My junk feminist approach to nuclear proliferation treats all bodies as political and these political bodies can range from the individual, to the nation, to the human polity as a whole. I take gender as a relational and performative and as such, it shapes the world and the relations between the various political bodies. Furthermore, laughter along with other political sentiments moves these bodies and shifts the relations between them; it orients various bodies towards and away from each other.

Both IR feminisms and PCWP approaches enable me to focus on the everyday, because scholars in these fields have numerous times argued that power relations extend way beyond IR's normally preferred focus. My focus in this project are the everyday parodic visualizations of wannabe nuclear states. These and other internet materials are still largely invisible from the IR point of view, even from the PCWP point of view. The parody images are both practices of popular culture and practices of everyday international relations (relations international) and as such, they are cultural sites where always gendered, sexualized, and racialized politics take place.

The circulation of internet 'stuff' and the randomness of our encounters with such stuff makes it challenging to engage with such material in scholarly way. In chapter four, I introduce my answer to these challenges: collaging as a methodological approach. Collaging is a playful mode of doing research that can be either theoretic, thematic, visual, or all of these at the same time. Theoretical and thematic collaging, and visual aspect more as a way of looking at art, are based on Christine Sylvester's work (2009, 2007a). Because of my focus on the everyday parody imagery depicting the nuclear wannabes and the nature of some of the imagery themselves as collage-like, I have proceeded to develop the visual aspect of the methodology further. To engage creatively with the research material and the possibilities of collaging, I have produced actual pieces of art, which will be featured in the empirical chapters.

In the latter part of chapter four, I describe the processes of making the pieces of art and of data collection. Both the images examined and the images used as the raw material of the collage art pieces have mainly been found through Google image searches and through what I call a reverse snowballing method. Google is significant, because it is almost ever-present in our everyday life, and it can both reveal and shape our everyday understanding of things.

Chapters five through seven are the more empirically oriented chapters where I do the actual junk feminist collaging work. In chapter five, the focus is on the first nuclear wannabe that is North Korea and the figures of its leaders, the late Kim Jong-il and his successor Kim Jong-un. I argue that our western everyday understanding of these characters is based mainly on anecdotes and rumors. Furthermore, parodies play a significant role in the constitution and circulation of the knowledge and understanding we have. The parodies and laughter they incite will be examined through the gendered and sexualized figures that I have named *Kim Jong (Mentally) Ill*, *Nuke Kid*, *Lonely Geek*, and *Luxurious Kims*.

In chapter six, I turn to the other wannabe, Iran, and look into a specific incident in its nuclear aspirations. In this instance, Iran released a photo to the world where an unsuccessful missile launch was photoshopped to appear successful. Immediately after finding this out, there was a surge of images on the internet parodying the “bad photoshop job”. The excessive focus on the failure in these specific parodies is the reason why I initially turned to questions of laughter and how it orders the international. In this chapter exaggeration and repetition are the methodological keys that make the connections between nuclear proliferation (and other weaponry) and gender and sexuality strikingly obvious, if they haven’t yet been so.

Chapter seven moves us back to North Korea and forms another sort of collage more serious in nature than the other two empirical chapters. In it, I examine the regimes of humor that appear in contemporary world politics and juxtapose them with compassion, another kind of political sentiment. This chapter turns more towards thematic and conceptual collaging as it juxtaposes nuclear proliferation with another important world political issue, namely humanitarianism and the politics of compassion central to it. The conceptual focus, then, is on the visual politics related to this juxtaposition, and I make the case for effects that the parodies examined in chapters five and six potentially have and that is that they make very real suffering invisible. Thus the regimes of laughter put up boundaries and limits for compassion.



## 2    Disciplinary and beyond

As it is customary to stake a claim to which field this doctoral dissertation contributes to, I want to start this chapter by stating that primarily this research project is a contribution to the feminist and gender studies “camp” of the academic discipline we know as International Relations (IR). I also aim to contribute to the PCWP camp, but in this chapter, the discussion remains on IR feminisms, because it functions as the main background and source that my junk feminist approach builds upon. The camp of IR feminisms is broad and transdisciplinary and slips in and out of IR. To emphasize the broadness and multiplicity, and to retain inclusivity, I choose to write about IR feminisms rather than feminist IR. Those who practice the various IR feminisms appear on the pages of this book as feminist IR scholars or IR feminists.

The contribution I aim to make is the theoretical and methodological approach developed and applied in this research project: *junk feminist collaging*. Junk feminism is my take on feminist curiosity (Enloe 2004), a subset of feminist curiosity, if you will. Junk feminism relies on decades of feminist work in IR and approaches research - and life - with an attitude akin to feminist curiosity. It questions and probes that which is usually seen as normal and natural especially in relation to gender. Gendered constructions, for example ways of thinking and acting that are normally assigned to women or men, are not biologically determined, i.e. natural, but are made to seem natural. The everyday discussions on typical manly or womanly behavior (men are from Mars, women are from Venus type of stuff) uphold and reinvigorate the myth of natural gender roles in not so subtle ways.

Holding up the fiction of natural gender roles takes a lot of work and power that often remains invisible or unnoticed. When one becomes curious of workings of gender and gendered cultural logics, this power starts to become visible. Feminist curiosity is aimed at potential cultural and structural causalities, and asks “feminist questions about the workings of femininity and of masculinity no matter what the topic being explored in International Relations” which enables “more analytically subtle and more politically realistic” scholarship (Enloe 2007c: 184). Feminist curiosity “prompts one to pay attention to things that conventionally are treated as

if they were either ‘natural’ or, even if acknowledged to be artificial, are imagined to be ‘trivial’, that is, imagined to be without explanatory significance.” (Enloe 2004: 220).

The keyword for junk feminism in the above quote is *trivial*. Junk feminism takes the trivial, steps aside the camp of IR feminisms, and pays attention to the junk left behind or outside the area lighted by the campfire(s). It playfully explores the shadowy areas and borderlands and questions the boundaries that are set up, often unintentionally. Whenever research agendas are being set (no matter how loosely) something always falls outside, which is only natural because no one or no approach can cover everything. What junk feminism helps to find, in this case, are materials and themes that fall outside of most of IR feminisms today. The issue of nuclear proliferation and the relative lack of attention to it within IR feminisms have tickled my junk feminist curiosity for the past decade or so. Everyone in the field has read and cited Carol Cohn’s work, especially “Sex and Death” (1987a) but surely it was not the final word on nuclear weaponry and feminism. One would think that since nuclear weapons have not gone anywhere, there would be more feminist work on the issue besides a few articles here and there (e.g. Duncanson & Eschle 2008; Das 2008, 2006, 2003).

Perhaps it is the problem of bodies, or the lack of them, in this instance. What I mean by this is that the abstraction level when it comes to nuclear proliferation is such that the bodies of “real women” seem to disappear from sight. Maybe we need the bodies of real life women to justify the feminist approaches to ourselves and to others. But now I’m getting ahead of myself.

The discussion in this chapter on interdisciplinary vis-à-vis feminisms in IR opens the work towards the discipline of IR and attempts to establish relevance of this sort of work to those readers coming from more mainstream-ish positions, some keepers of gates that I have needed to pass through, yet an explicit engagement with the so called mainstream is refused. Positioning the work up against mainstream always necessarily constructs the margin versus center setting that is worth resisting. When one comes from the margin and writes against the mainstream a huge amount of energy is invested to persuade the center to pay attention, to listen, and to take one seriously. However, even when I have refused an explicit engagement, the mainstream (whatever it even is) appears here and there as a reflective surface from



which to mirror the specificity of some feminist interventions, for example anti-war feminist approaches on nuclear proliferation.

Many feminist IR scholars have admirably engaged in the work of explicit engagements with the more powerful camps with debatable success. Debatable, because the powerful camps still aren't listening and paying attention to feminist work and we keep repeating the same conversations and scripts. Much has changed in the world and in the world of IR in 10 years between Tickner's (1997) "You Just Don't Understand: Troubled Engagements between Feminists and IR Theorists" and Sylvester's (2007b) "Anatomy of a footnote", yet much has stayed the same. The engagements keep on being troubled, or nearly nonexistent, relegated to footnotes or feminist work clumped together with bunch of other "marginal" approaches.

More things change the more they stay the same.

Feminisms in IR, nor beyond the academia, have by no means failed despite some claims to the contrary (for a discussion on these claims, see e.g. Stern & Zalewski 2009). Feminist projects are as necessary today as they have been in the last decades and this scholar remains as committed to feminism as ever.<sup>2</sup> What kind of feminism my junk feminism is will be answered in the following pages and chapters. There exists no one true Feminism. On the contrary, feminisms are almost as many as those that identify themselves as feminists, loudly or quietly. Some feminisms resonate with each other and various other forms of social justice activism better than with others and some feminisms resonate with me better than others do. Those that resonate I have built into junk feminist collaging to describe my feminist approach to and beyond IR.

My junk feminism is carnivalesque feminist praxis that emphasizes joy in research and in life more broadly. The camp of IR feminisms has established itself within the wider field of IR, and as a serious academic (sub-)field it, too, can take itself too seriously. This is completely understandable, because to be taken seriously by others one often has to perform seriousness. Junk feminism wants to disturb this seriousness by introducing humorous materials and playing around with lighthearted approach and style more generally. In other words, with junk feminism I want to camp up feminist IR by bringing in stuff and emphasizing attitude that do not quite

---

<sup>2</sup> There are fantastic contemporary online projects highlighting why we (still) need feminism, e.g. <http://whoneedsfeminism.tumblr.com/> and <http://whoneedsfeminism.com/about.html>

seem to fit in in the first place. I want to challenge playfully both the boundaries of (IR) research and the serious modes of doing research. This kind of process of disturbance always includes slippages. My own work slips back and forth between the more lighthearted and playful tone and a more serious mode of writing, which makes the style collage-like. The shifts in style aim to function as resistance and disruptions to the demands for seriousness inherent to academic writing. I have chosen not to distinguish these shifts and the different styles visually (by changing the font or layout), but instead let them do their work as part of the ‘normal’ body text.

To reiterate, junk feminism

- is a humorous, playful and lighthearted approach (to research and life)
- looks for unconventional and mundane research materials
- “camps up”, i.e. joyfully transgresses disciplinary boundaries and resists camp structures of IR
- includes a style of writing, which oscillates between academic and “anti-academic”/everyday modes of expression
- uses collages and collaging methodologically.

The collage-like nature of junk feminism refuses neat labels and boxes that suffocate creativity and discipline us politically, academically, intellectually, bodily, and emotionally.

## 2.1 IR feminisms as a transdisciplinary collage

IR feminisms and feminisms in other academic disciplines can be understood in terms of multi-sourcing (Sorenau & Hudson 2008: 143), in other words feminist research and knowledge production draws theories and methodologies from multiple sources within and beyond the so called traditional disciplines, yet feminist

research remains closely connected to them (e.g. Hark 2007; Kitch 2007; Mikkeli & Pakkasvirta 2007). IR feminisms have by necessity multi-sourced, because conventional IR has not provided tools for addressing questions pertinent to gender and/in world politics.

In many places feminist research, and knowledge production, has been institutionalized into Women's Studies or Gender Studies<sup>3</sup> programs. It has been argued that the interdisciplinary nature of these fields sets makes them distinct in the academia (see Hark 2007: 13) and the same claim is sometimes made about IR itself (in contrast with the disciplines that have been traditionally seen as core social sciences). As distinct interdisciplinary fields both Gender Studies and IR can be called neodisciplines. Drawing from David Long's terminology (Long 2011; see also Aalto et al. 2012), I posit feminist IR as a transdisciplinary field, which creatively combines two neodisciplines - Gender Studies and IR - while locating itself within the latter, although most of the time in the margins of it.

IR feminisms as a field or camp is transdisciplinary in that it (especially the first generation of feminist IR) aims at radical and critical transformation of IR. To achieve this end IR feminisms have posed serious challenges to the order of knowledge production in IR, but it can be argued that the efforts have resulted only in producing partial transformation in the margins of IR and leaving the center of IR untouched. It is not this simple, however, that IR simply is (as an unchanging entity) while IR feminisms have attempted to transform it. Simultaneously to feminist interventions in the last 25 or so years, there have been changes to the very structures of IR as a whole. If one wants to talk the 'big debates' talk, the changes started with the 3rd debate and lead to possibly 4th and 5th debate and more and more fragmentation resulting in the current camp structure (see Sylvester 2007a, 2013).

The view that IR feminisms have only succeeded in partial transformation in the margins is (re-)produced in many feminist IR disciplinary discussions, although the notion of the center, core, or mainstream of IR is a contested one. Who knows, and who decides, what the mainstream is and includes these days and does it even exist?

---

<sup>3</sup> Naming practices vary from institution to institution, also Feminist Studies is used (see Lykke 2007), and the substance of the subject matter is also diverse, often including studies on masculinity, queer studies, postcolonial approaches etc.

The camp structure argument seems to flatten the power hierarchies that the mainstream-margins view holds, that is if we understand that a camp is a camp is a camp. By this, I mean that we assume all camps to have equal platforms for publishing their work and being heard. Indeed, central to Sylvester's view of the camp structure is that IR's fragmentation into camps is intensified because each camp has their favorite theorists, their own professional organizations (e.g. sections of ISA) and their own journals and that cross-camp communication becomes increasingly difficult (Sylvester 2007a, 2013). It is important to keep in mind that the camp structure, too, contains power differentials and hierarchies (see Wilcox 2013 for a similar argument). Some camps are still generally seen as more "proper IR" than others, there are still rankings of journals that place specific journals in the top 10 and so on.

No matter the view of IR, camps or mainstream-margins, it is useful to remember that it is not necessarily a problem to be in the margins or in a less influential camp. After all, "politics of defining, studying, and being from the margins has been critical to feminist IR scholarship since its inception" (Ackerly et al. 2006: 2) and a certain sense of homelessness within the discipline can be a productive and creative position (Sylvester 1994) and a way to avoid being disciplined.

Seeing IR itself as a neodiscipline puts the emphasis on its interdisciplinarity, because ordinary disciplinary contexts are insufficient to address all the dimensions of relations international that we collectively should be trying to figure out. This kind of self-understanding for IR would imply hope for openness and flexibility and lessen the need for exercises of disciplinary power and gatekeeping. Furthermore, feminist IR self-image as a transdisciplinary practice fits well within this kind of conception of IR, and feminist contributions can be seen to strengthen the field as a whole.

To argue for an understanding of IR feminisms as a collage-like transdisciplinary field, is to emphasize that there is no singular Feminist approach to IR. Rather IR feminisms form a collage-like structure that consists of theoretical and methodological approaches which can be related or complementary, divergent and even conflicting (Sjoberg 2009: 69). Conceptualization of a collage-like structure (or is it a non-structure?) means that it allows for and encourages discussions to emerge between different schools of thought, different feminisms, despite the differences and conflicts. In the context of transdisciplinarity treating IR feminisms as a collage

is to argue for inclusivity and against internal gatekeeping, because there are no clear lines of demarcating and limiting the outer bounds nor are there internal divisions into neat boxes or separate approaches. Rather, as a whole IR feminisms share a commitment and an interest in various observations of gender subordination in global politics (cf. *ibid*).

Transdisciplinary collage of IR feminisms - the collective body of feminist scholarship in IR - aims at transformation of the social order(s) rather than simply explaining them (cf. Ackerly and True 2010: 2). The social orders that are seen as needing to be transformed range from the global to the local, including academia, and the explicit focus of what needs transforming varies from study to study, or from researcher to researcher, or one from feminist approach to another.

The collage-like structure of IR feminisms is precisely why others seem to have a hard time understanding and pinning feminisms down within IR and thus the “troubled engagements” (Tickner 1997) keep happening over and over again. The clear-cut definitions of feminisms from the outside aim to also discipline IR feminisms into a neat box of “Feminist IR” or to use art terms into a traditional still-life (see Sylvester 1994) or some other piece of art that offers itself to interpretations more easily and straightforwardly than a messy and playful collage does.

## 2.2 Why feminism and not just gender?

Why insist on talking about feminisms, if it is indeed so messy and hard for others to understand and pin down? Why not rebrand<sup>4</sup> IR feminisms? Why not just talk about gender and IR, or gender in IR, if it would then be easier to approach? Some scholars like to make a distinction between feminist IR and gender IR (GIR). For example, Judith Squires and Jutta Weldes have characterized the relationship between the two to be “like a Venn diagram of concentric circles. Feminist IR sits at

---

<sup>4</sup> There is an ad campaign to rebrand popular or mainstream feminism, because the word currently has such negative connotations to so many. See <http://vitaminw.co/culture-society/rebranding-feminism-contest>

the core of a larger (multi/inter/trans) discipline—GIR—that genders IR in a variety of both feminist and non-feminist ways. These concentric circles are themselves intersected by wider social theories, so that, for instance, post-colonial theory, critical theory, post-modernism or positivism intersect both the wider GIR circle and the inner core of feminist IR.” (Squires & Weldes 2007: 191). In other words, the feminist IR inner core consists of “a body of work that addresses political problems of international significance through feminism” (Zalewski 2007: 303). Feminist interventions have started forming the inner core first and by doing so they have opened up theoretical and empirical space within IR (Ackerly et al. 2006: 1) and thus made room for the wider field GIR.

What Squires and Weldes (2007) suggest is that the self-image of feminist IR as having marginal status in IR vis-à-vis the mainstream that separates it from GIR. This self-image arises from the parallel preoccupation character of IR feminisms that pays attention to disciplinarity and feminisms’ positionality within IR. It is also known as double research agenda, which is central to many feminist works, but is not a concern for GIR. This dual agenda can be often seen as navel-gazing that contributes to the continuing marginalization of IR feminisms and the response is to get on with the work of gender analysis and ignore the disciplinary discussions altogether.

I would rather not throw out the disciplinary discussions and double research agendas, but following Cynthia Enloe’s definition that it is the emphasis on power, and the commitment to investigate it, makes the analysis feminist in separation from gender analysis (e.g. Enloe 2007a). In other words, for feminist analysis it is important to ask “what forms power takes, how exactly it is wielded in any given setting, who wields power, who gains from it and who is silenced by it, or excluded, marginalized or oppressed by it, and who is able to contest and resist those uses of power, and how” (ibid. 101). The commitment to investigate power means that the questions of disciplinary power in the field of IR as a whole remain as a parallel occupation for this junk feminist scholar. Especially because classic silencing tactics and marginalizing activities in day to day scholarly engagements are not a thing of the past, but remain all too common, these issues must remain central.

Contributions of IR feminisms can be seen to flow in two directions, contributing to both neodisciplines they initially draw from. That is, on one hand, feminist interventions bring to the fore gender issues and questions in IR, while on the other



hand, they add an important dimension to Gender Studies, namely, the traditional IR issues and questions regarding the international, security, war, conflict, militarization, globalization etc.

It can happen that when visiting the terrain of Gender Studies, IR (or political science) becomes the identifying marker, the flag to be waved, so to speak. Justificatory moves and explanatory modes can be different in these settings than when traveling as a feminist in IR. For example, for IR audience one might have to start from the very beginning of what gender means while for a Gender Studies audience one might have to explain different understandings of what the political is. In other words, value added and possible challenges arise from a different angle, IR feminisms might not challenge the core concepts of gender studies (as they do to IR), but we can offer valuable insights that include global perspectives.

IR feminisms aim to further our understanding of both the world political and of gender through examining various questions related to these broad categories.

The above mentioned emphasis on power and the interest in all power relations, which is “essential to feminist perspectives and to the feminist research process” and separates IR feminisms from gender approach to IR and makes IR feminisms “highly relevant for the study of global politics” (Ackerly et al. 2006: 1). In turn, the interest in and study of power inscribed in global politics is what makes the contributions of IR feminisms highly relevant for Gender Studies. In terms of methodological contributions “IR feminism contributes to IR and interdisciplinary feminist debates [i.e. Women’s/Gender Studies] about the merits of different methodological approaches and the potential abuses of power” (Ackerly et al. 2006: 5). Furthermore, most feminist scholars can be said, or at least hoped, to share “an underlying epistemological imperative favouring the building of connections across differences” (Eschle & Maiguascha 2009: 127) rather than engaging in disciplinary border patrolling and gatekeeping. Building connections between different perspectives within a single discipline, between multiple disciplines, and beyond academia can lead to dialogical encounters, which in turn “help not only to generate better answers, but also to raise questions and to provoke what Cynthia Enloe has called ‘feminist curiosity’” (ibid.). Importantly, seeing IR feminisms as a transdisciplinary collage aims at opening up new lines of inquiries across, between, and beyond conventional disciplines rather than only filling the gaps in the terrains establishes by those disciplines (cf. Ackerly and True 2010: 2).

IR feminisms do not offer a scientific research program, because the transdisciplinary collage they form does not locate comfortably within a rational-scientific paradigm, instead it resists the attempts to pin it down and to establish “proper parameters” for it (Kinsella 2003; Zalewski 2003). Many IR feminists have undertaken the dual research agenda, as discussed above, but with varying degrees of emphasis on each element.

One element of the dual agenda is the realization that that we cannot deny that women are present everywhere in the international realm and therefore need to make sure they are also (re)present(ed) in IR. The other element asserts that gender needs to be taken into account and taken seriously in IR (Wibben 2004). Feminist IR scholars “have had to be particularly creative with the tools of a discipline not intended for the questions feminists ask, and notably eclectic in drawing on tools from other disciplines and sites.” And they “have developed not just a toolkit of methods but ways of incorporating ontological and epistemological reflection into methodological choices that lead them to rethink the boundaries of the IR discipline” (Ackerly et al.: 4). In other words, feminist IR, unlike GIR, is conscious of and discusses disciplinarity and disciplinary power side by side with the empirical work. Importantly, IR feminisms as a whole is, and continues to be, one of the sites in IR where interdisciplinarity had been effectively, and creatively, performed for three decades. Putting emphasis on the interdisciplinarity of both feminisms and IR (seeing IR as a neodiscipline) could get us out of the anxious relationship and continuous disciplinary moves. Focusing on the similarities instead of the differences could help to shift the discourse to grounds that are more productive. This is not to say that we should simply find the lowest common denominator and build a research program from there (cf. Kurki & Stavrianakis 2009: 118), but instead attempt to have a meaningful dialogue without losing sight of the disciplinary power and remembering to be wary of domination (cf. Klabbers 2009: 124).

It is safe to say that IR has been effectively ‘gendered’ in the past two decades. That is to say, that feminist and gender research have left some kind of lasting mark on the field as a whole. However, there are differing views of what these effects have been qualitatively and quantitatively and how to observe the effects in the first place. On one hand, we can go about listing feminist achievements and contributions, but on the other hand, there is a sense of failure of the feminist transformative project. Nevertheless, “it would be difficult to dispute the fact that feminism is a well-



established field of critical thought and arena of critical practice. In many ways, it is an exemplary realm that resists its own depoliticization” (Sylvester 2007a: 554).

The afore mentioned parallel occupation with disciplinary power while engaging in empirical research, which separates IR feminisms from GIR, effectively functions as a way of resisting depoliticization. Keeping on using the label feminism serves as a constant reminder of the political nature of all the research we do.

## 2.3 Brief histories of IR/feminism mutual encounters

During the last two decades, feminist scholars of international relations have dealt extensively with issues of war, militarization and security.<sup>5</sup> The discussions on where and how feminist works fit into the broader field of International Relations (IR) research have been plentiful.<sup>6</sup> The relationship between feminism and the so called mainstream IR or ‘malestream’<sup>7</sup> seems to be an anxious one as some chapter and article titles demonstrate: “You just don’t understand” (Tickner 1997); “Troubled Encounters: Feminism Meets IR” (Tickner 2001: ch 1); “Feminist International Relations: a contradiction in terms?” (Youngs 2004); “‘Women’s troubles’ again in IR” (Zalewski 2003); “Do we understand each other yet?” (Zalewski 2007). These feminist disciplinary discussions can be seen as attempts to justify the legitimacy of feminist research within the ‘father field’, which however ends up problematically reproducing the authority of the mainstream and maintaining its boundaries (e.g. Stern & Zalewski 2009: 614).

Initially, feminist scholars put a lot of hope on the transformative power of their interventions and explorations in the field of IR. As a result, changing our

---

<sup>5</sup> e.g. Elhstain 1987; Enloe 1989, 1993, 2000; Hansen 2000; Tickner 1992, 2001; Cooke & Woollacott 1993; Sjoberg 2006

<sup>6</sup> e.g. Sylvester 1994, 2002, 2004; Enloe 1996; Tickner 1997; Zalewski 1995; Weber 1999; Blanchard 2003; Wibben 2004

<sup>7</sup> e.g. Youngs 2004; Squires & Weldes 2007: 189; Vogt 2008: 366

understanding of what international relations are and how they should be studied, and consequently producing better knowledge and science, and through that a better world without or beyond restrictive gender hierarchies (e.g. Carver 2008: 110). Recently, however, the failure of feminism to live up to its potential has been brought up (Zalewski et al. 2008; Stern & Zalewski 2009). Or, if not a sense of failure, a weariness of not fulfilling the transformative promise: “if one were simply to read exchanges within the discipline of international relations, feminism would appear to be in a state of suspended animation” (Kinsella 2003: 295).

Feminist interventions in the field of IR have not been in vain. After all, if we want to do a quantitative take, the numbers add up. Many curricula, syllabi, and textbooks on IR theories now include some feminist texts, journals have special issues on gender and feminism, there is the *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, the number of panels at the annual ISA conference has risen to a significant level and the Feminist Theory and Gender Studies Section has a growing membership and visibility. Yet the disciplinary discussion continues and feminist contributions often still keep being ignored or sidelined (e.g. Sylvester 2007a, 2007b; Sorena & Hudson 2008; Foster et al. 2012). It is not only feminist contributions, but contributions by women in general, which are cited less in IR than those of men (see Maliniak et al. 2013; Nexon 2013; Lake 2013). When women’s work appears to be less-than that of men’s, and is systematically given less attention by IR scholars, we still need feminist analysis of disciplinary practices despite the advances that have been already made.

In the context of interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity, it is significant to remember that the transformative expectation feminist scholars pose on themselves arises precisely from the interdisciplinary nature of feminist knowledge production. Feminist interdisciplinarity is seen to pose a fundamental epistemic challenge to the traditional disciplines in its production of knowledge that does not fit the usual structure of knowledge production and thus feminist scholar imaginary of the self is one of being an agent of change (Hark 2007: 22). For some other scholars the self-image might rather be that they see themselves as the pursuants of truth, for example.

As I have tried to emphasize by talking about IR feminisms as a transdisciplinary collage, feminist approaches in IR are manifold, there is no one Feminist Theory or Feminist Methodology as the book titled *Feminist Methodologies for International Relations* tellingly demonstrates (Ackerly et al. 2006). The contributions in the book build on earlier interdisciplinary work on feminist methodologies and the editors

argue that “[t]he distinctiveness of feminist methodologies inside and outside IR lies in their reflexivity, which encourages the researcher to re-interrogate continually her own scholarship” (ibid: 3-4). In other words, “feminist scholarship does in general share a situated and dialogical approach to knowledge production” and it “entails the explicit contextualisation of research questions and methods in terms of the political commitments and specific standpoint of the researcher” (Eschle & Maiguascha 2009: 127). This complexity, indeed, may contribute to the anxious relationship between feminist and mainstream IR and the lack of serious engagement with feminist work.

Seeing IR feminisms as a collage-like transdisciplinary structure resists strict and neat categorizations and the politics of inclusion and exclusion implied in these categorizations. This is to say that by talking about IR feminisms as a whole, I have tried to go against the pressure of labeling any subcategories of IR feminisms and positioning my work in terms of any one of them.

Positioning my work as junk feminist, means that I see myself simply as a feminist scholar moving about in the fields of IR, being sympathetic to various feminisms and some other critical approaches and drawing from them, but refusing at this point in time to part-take in more specific academic naming politics. However, to illustrate the complexity of the field of IR feminisms, it is useful to rehash some of the ways in which IR feminisms and their encounters with the broader IR have been represented.

As I have indicated repeatedly, because IR feminisms form a collage-like structure, there is no clear-cut way of approaching this body of knowledge. The camp of IR feminisms, similar to any other camps or even a whole discipline, has internal debates and disputes. The core concepts of IR feminisms are not fixed, nor are the subjects and goals of feminism. In other words, the meaning and designation of all three - concepts, subjects, and goals - is intrinsically political and historically fluid (Kinsella 2003: 294).

The usual recitals of the history of feminist research in IR consist of mainly two themes, which often are both present in feminist works. One concentrates on the mentioned anxious relationship of feminism and the mainstream, and lot of feminist research consists of writing the story of their research up against the so-called mainstream IR. The other way to tell the story is to present some form of typology of feminist theories or approaches (e.g. Sylvester 1994; Tickner & Sjoberg 2007) or

categorizing feminist work and feminist methodologies. As a way of brief introduction to IR feminisms, the following paragraphs will go over some classificatory schemes presented by feminist IR scholars.

The most often cited categorization of feminist epistemologies comes from Sandra Harding (1986): feminist empiricism, which aims at correcting the masculine bias of sciences; feminist standpoint, which take women's experience and activities as a starting point for knowledge building; and feminist postmodernism, which problematizes the category of 'women' (e.g. Sylvester 1994). In other words, according to feminist empiricism mainstream research contains an androcentric and misogynist bias, which needs to be erased in order to produce really objective science and reach an unmediated truth. Feminist standpoint claims that truth is always mediated by the knower's position in the social structures such as class, race, and/or gender, taking to account knowledge arising from marginal positions results in better science altogether. Feminist postmodernism is deeply suspicious of any universalizing claims and posits that knowledge is invented rather than discovered. (Hawkesworth 1989: 535-6.) If I have to use this categorization, I would say that junk feminism is a mixture of standpoint and postmodern feminism, that position of the researcher (knower) matters a great deal, but any universalizing claims are highly problematic.

Another categorization of IR feminisms consists of liberal feminism, which "calls attention to the subordinate position of women in global politics [...] investigating the causes of this subordination within a positivist framework", using gender as an explanatory variable; critical feminism which "explores the ideational and material manifestations of gendered identities and gendered power in global politics"; feminist constructivism "emphasize the ideational rather than the material elements of global politics" and "focus on the way that ideas about gender shape and are shaped by global politics"; feminist poststructuralism which focuses on "meaning as it is codified in language"; and postcolonial feminism which is concerned about colonial relations of domination and subordination" which continue to persist in global politics of today and "are built into the way the colonized are represented in Western knowledge" (Tickner & Sjoberg 2007). In terms of these categorizations this junk feminism would locate at the intersection of feminist poststructuralism and feminist constructivism with a hint of postcolonial feminism (not yet taking this last aspect far enough).

A third way that feminist research in IR is often categorized is a division along generational lines (or into waves). Accordingly, the first generation's (first wave) focus was mainly on theory formulation and the second generation used gendered lenses to study empirical situations (Tickner & Sjoberg 2007: 188). Alternatively, it can be said that the first generation feminist IR scholars were/are more interested in the disciplinary discussions while the second (or even third) generation scholars just get on with the program, that is focus on doing feminist IR (or GIR) rather than preoccupying themselves with meta-theoretical and disciplinary discussions. On these terms, my junk feminism retains the first generation's commitment to examining disciplinarity while getting on with the work and refusing to spend too much energy on addressing the mainstream(s).

Jacqui True (2005) presents yet another useful heuristic for discussing feminist IR; it consists of three overlapping categories: empirical feminism, analytical feminism, and normative feminism. The first "focuses on women and/or explores gender as an empirical dimension of international relations", the second "uses gender as an theoretical category to reveal the gender bias of International Relations concepts and and explain constitutive aspects of international relations", and the third "reflects on the process of theorizing as part of a normative agenda for social and political change" (ibid: 214). In this heuristic junk feminism would be a combination of the three categories. It does have a strong normative agenda locating it in the tradition of anti-war and anti-militarist feminisms. It does not focus on women as such but has an empirical dimension on a level of the symbolic realm, which also ties into analytical feminism in that the focus is on gender as a cultural logic that constitutes relations international.

It is important to remember that none of the categories presented above are mutually exclusive and often any given feminist work is hard to place in only one of them. In other words, junk feminisms refusal to be categorized is not unusual for feminist work. Many feminist scholars formulate theory and study empirical situations at the same time, or draw from both standpoint and postmodern traditions at once.

Thus, feminist research is often multivocal or polymodal, also feminist research, in IR and elsewhere, has from the very beginning been interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary. Some feminist work may even be non-disciplinary, as Roland Bleiker has described Cynthia Enloe's work. Enloe's work is very extensive and exemplary in terms of accessibility, because of her writing style. Her work focuses

on different forms and aspects of militarism and militarization<sup>8</sup> and according to Bleiker:

“she circumvents disciplinary boundaries and reveals what otherwise would remain unnoticed: that ‘relations between governments depend not only on capital and weaponry, but also on the control of women as symbols, consumers, workers and emotional comforters’. Enloe’s *non-disciplinary based inquiries represent an encounter*, for they challenge both the conventions of IR scholarship and the narrow ‘realities’ they have created through well-entrenched representations.” (Bleiker 2001: 524, emphasis added).

Such a great inspiration and role model for any aspiring feminist scholar!

## 2.4 Towards camping up IR feminisms

Although feminist IR research often starts from the question “Where are the women?” or “What are the women doing?” junk feminism as a mode of feminist curiosity takes us beyond these classic feminist IR questions. In this regard, it is important to note that feminism should not be equated only with women, nor understood to be solely about gender. Gender, indeed, is not a synonym for women (Carver 1996) and “feminism is not about studying women and gender exclusively” (Ackerly et al. 2006: 4). Rather, IR feminisms are interested in “What work are ideas about sex, femininity and masculinity doing?” (Zalewski 2006: 61) and a variety of complex and detailed questions following these three basic and broad questions. In other words, IR feminisms, indeed, are “interested in the gendered social practices of the world and the role of women in the world” (Vogt 2008: 366), but moreover also in how the gendered social practices intersect with other categories constituting unequal social relations such as race, sexuality or class.

---

<sup>8</sup> including books such as Bananas, Beaches, and Bases (1989); The Morning After - Sexual politics at the end of the cold war (1993); Maneuvers - the international politics of militarizing women’s lives (2000); Globalization and Militarism - Feminists make the link (2007); Nimo’s War, Emma’s War : Making Feminist Sense of the Iraq War (2010).



According to Christine Sylvester “[f]eminist theory is about studying gender - its stories, shapes, locations, evocations, and rules of behavior - usually in tandem with other modern subject statuses such as class, race, age, religion and so on” (1994: 9). In terms of conventional IR language: “[j]ust as states, conflict, institutions, security, and globalization cannot be studied without analyzing gender, gender cannot be studied without analyzing these subjects and concepts” (Ackerly et al. 2006: 4). Furthermore, IR feminisms can be “the site for true intellectual curiosity, to be still interested in what is not known and to treat this creatively. To move beyond habitual exchanges of accepted truths and the repetition of familiar arguments and positions” (Hark 2007: 28). This creativity demands, to borrow from Marysia Zalewski: “Making radical conceptual leaps – or nudging/rupturing epistemological and political imaginations – [which] is one of the things I think feminism can be extremely good at” (Zalewski et al. 2008: 37).

Transdisciplinary collage of IR feminisms continuously challenge the attempts to fix the boundaries of IR and to keep them closed (cf. Shepherd 2007: 252). The debate structure that can be said to have defined and dominated IR from its inception to 1990s was unified by an IR-ism that was very narrow and exclusionary and the third debate questioned its limitations and broadened its scope tremendously and fundamentally (cf. e.g. Sylvester 2007b: 553). The disciplining hold of this IR-ism loosened during the so-called third debate when the conceptions of what are appropriate topics of study, how they should be studied and who are taken seriously as disciplinary subjects, broadened considerably. By the turn of the millennium, this broadening, however, had turned into splintering and new smaller centers of power started emerging. As Sylvester describes:

“IR today exists as fragments, zones, and camp-ish camps, all taking some exception to the many ‘other participants’ in IR. We rally around our texts, our ‘specific individuals’, our debates, our workshops. Quite possibly, we do not even know the important texts from a neighboring camp in the field – or really care to engage them” (Sylvester 2007a: 556).

Transgressing disciplinary boundaries and resisting the camp structure does not have to be done in a serious manner. On the contrary, one can aim to camp up IR and IR feminisms as the “whole point of camp is to dethrone the serious” and to “be serious about the frivolous, frivolous about the serious” (Sontag 1961/2009: 288). Here the double meaning of “camp” comes into play. It is not only a camp as a group for people with similar commitments, but a sensibility and a vision of the world. Camp sensibility is a loving and tender sensibility, which is I suggest it to do work in and

for junk feminism. By wanting IR feminisms to take themselves less seriously, I'm not in any means laughing at their too-serious-nature. On the contrary, I have always enjoyed IR feminism tremendously. To camp up, is to embrace the exaggerated, the playfulness, the extravagant, and the 'too much' that can't be taken seriously. The creative sensibility of camp is that of failed seriousness. Furthermore, camp resists good-bad axis of judgment and instead sets different set of standards. (cf. Sontag 1961/: 275-292)

Even though the notion of mainstream has been contested and the discipline has fragmented into a camp structure, there exists a sort of IR-ism that seeks to defend the boundaries of the discipline and claims ownership of the international and authority over subjects that are deemed to belong to the realm of the international. I choose to call this IR-ism, because for many IR scholars, not least to myself, being an IR scholar is as much of an identity as being a feminist might be.

All of us IR scholars have more or less consciously absorbed IR-ism in the course of our training and professionalization. However, it is easier to take the boundaries for granted when one comfortably locates within them while feminist awareness often results in a sense of homelessness in terms of the possibility of belonging within the more traditional ways of studying the international. The sense of homelessness often turns into criticism of the boundaries that demarcate one's exclusion and the IR-ism keeps drawing us back to IR rather than abandoning it altogether. IR-ism thus works as an emotional attachment, and creates and keeps up the bond with the "father-field".

Looking from the outside, feminism is often seen as a political identity, but I see it as much more than that, as a complete way of being in the world. Juxtaposing this notion with conceptualization of IR-ism emphasizes that the latter is as much an identity construction. For some it sits more tightly and comfortably and is a more encompassing identity than for others. All of us, IR trained scholars, position our work and ourselves in some relation to IR and IR-ism, critically or embracing, implicitly or explicitly. For lot of feminists in IR the relationship with the broader IR is an anxious one, as discussed previously.

There are, of course, many practical and rational reasons for holding on to IR as a professional and conceptual anchor, but the question for me remains how to forget those aspects of IR-ism, which kill creativity. Training and professionalization into



the conventions, that so often are murder to creative sensibilities, are necessary. However, equally necessary to this author is to find ways to regain those sensibilities.

This project as a whole is a journey that starts from sometimes an uncomfortable position of feminist IR. This means a few things. It is a journey of a feminist in IR and it is a journey through both IR and feminism. To move through both of these fields or intellectual engagements does not mean that there is an end to this journey beyond them where I can forget IR or feminism, or both. Nor is there an arrival point where they comfortably merge into a coherent whole. Rather it is a process of constant negotiation with what it is to do IR as a feminist and do feminism as an IR scholar. Furthermore, this abstract starting point of uncomfortable feminist IR is not the only starting point. There are others than can be traced back to various temporal and physical locations while some beginnings remain untraceable. Collage thinking is where I turn to in order to continue on this journey as it enables me to camp up IR feminisms. This is to say that I attempt to take a playful approach to both feminisms and IR-isms to engage creatively with both.

## 2.5 Being a junk feminist / junk feminist being

Treating IR feminisms as a transdisciplinary collage allows for empathic engagements (or co-operation cf. Sylvester 2002) rather than a competition between various approaches over who is doing feminism right or wrong. Competition only leads to the exclusion of those who are perceived as not being good enough feminists. To be critical of too much competition and gatekeeping ties intimately into the understanding of feminism this author holds. That is to say, feminism is more than an intellectual engagement or an identity; it is a way of being in and of the world. That is to say, feminism as I see it is a total corporeal, emotional, and intellectual engagement that implies a sense of wholeness to the world (cf. Soreanu 2010: 391).

I use junk feminism as a catch(y) phrase that not only draws attention to the ways in which feminisms in IR continue to be devalued and marginalized. It is also a way of, once again, reclaiming the power of studying 'low politics', the everyday, the silenced,

the invisible, all of that which can be so often deemed as useless junk. In this sense, junk feminism is ironic and reflects the frustration I've felt when running into active marginalization attempts even though feminists (and other critical scholars) in IR have been doing so much work to have junky topics and themes recognized as legitimate scholarship. At the same time, the junk in my feminism is an attempt to reclaim a term that is usually seen as negative and give it a positive meaning. This idea of reclaiming negative terms has been part of feminist and minority politics for a long time and perhaps the most successful process has been to rid the term queer of its derogatory meaning (cf. Brontsema 2004). Naming my approach in this manner is empowering, it is a political move that opens up space, emotionally and intellectually, for the kind of work I want to do. An image of a refrigerator magnet keeps popping into my head. In it there's a drawing of a figure of 50's housewife with a nice smile and the text reads "You say I'm a bitch like it's a bad thing." In a specific location and context, which is IR in Finland / Finnish IR, I put on a nice smile, embrace the junkness of feminism all the way, and see where it takes me.

Using the term junk ironically and playfully also points towards challenging the humor/seriousness binary that seems to generally determine scholarship and exclude the humorous from the registers of expression in social scientific writing.

Moreover, my feminist approach to IR is junky in regards to the sources and materials I employ when studying the imaginaries of wannabe nuclear states. These materials consist of scraps found on the internet, mostly parodies, which means that the focus is on sources mostly ignored by IR scholars, feminist or otherwise, inclined. By placing junk in front of my feminism, I'm suggesting that it's worth paying attention also to these lighter sides of the everyday and that humorous materials can be fruitfully politicized.

Junk feminism shares an attitude with Halberstam's work, particularly *Gaga feminism* (2012) and Zalewski's *Exquisite corpse* (2013), which functions for her "as a kind of methodological muse conjoined with a heterodox and allegorical deployment of a range of techniques drawn from critical theory" (ibid.: 2). *Gaga feminism*, according to Halberstam (2012: xxv), is "a form of political expression that masquerades as naive nonsense but that actually participates in big and meaningful forms of critique. It finds inspiration in the silly and the marginal, the childish and the outlandish." The idea of the exquisite corpse evokes the childish, too. Zalewski (2013: 2) explains that it "might be more popularly recognised as the

children's game of consequences where one child writes or draws something at the top of a piece of paper, then folds it over so the next child can't see the preceding image/word, they then add their word/image and so on, hopefully ending up with — well for children — something ridiculously strange and funny.”

Finally, what junk also implies is that feminism as a total corporeal and emotional and intellectual engagement (cf. Soreanu 2010: 391) has made me a junkie. I am, indeed, obsessed with and dependent on feminist critique of the world around me. This is not to say I need to, or want to, recover.

The lived realities in academia and beyond and the reflexivity towards embodied knowledges “confront us with the bluntness and immensity of a core feminist tenet: the way we make knowledge runs in continuation to the way we make life, to the way we circulate across objects and the way we orchestrate our daily interactions” (Soreanu 2010: 391). Importantly, the way we theorize must flow back into the ways we engage in the everyday. If we theorize pluralism and inclusivity, for example, we must live by those values and act inclusively, be welcoming, and build bridges, rather than turning camps into compounds.

In order to perform and embrace transdisciplinarity structurally, institutionally, epistemologically and politically (cf. Liinason & van der Tuin 2007: 5), I aim at camping up IR feminisms by practicing junk feminism. Junk feminism actively resists easy divisions into ‘good’ and ‘bad’ feminisms and feminists, which lead into inclusions and exclusions, which are all too familiar from popular and academic feminist discussions.

Junk feminist practice as a means to camp up IR feminisms can be done through collage thinking. Camping up essentially boils down to the R.E.M. song title “Living well is the best revenge”. That is to say “camp responses play up lives lived joyfully and well, even extravagantly [...] [o]ver-the-top performances, which have always stretched credibility in conventional society” (Sylvester 2007a: 560). In my conceptualization, then, junk feminism entails a playful mode of analysis that takes seriously humor while approaching serious issues (e.g. war, militarism, nuclear proliferation) humorously and attempts to challenge the boundaries of credibility as they are constructed in contemporary academia.

Collage thinking can mess up the camp structures of IR (Sylvester 2007a, 2009) and function as active resistance against disciplinarity. If we accept the rough edges and

messiness that collage entails and actively try to retain openness for the possibility of unexpected and surprising juxtapositions, the claims for orthodoxy within feminism and within IR can be avoided, and actively resisted, both in theory and in everyday academic interpersonal interactions.

The nature of collage work is “junk to art” (cf. Finley and Knowles 1995: 120) and the techniques of collage as an art form “employ everyday objects to interrupt the purity and homogeneity of the painted surface [and] collapses the separation between ‘art’ and ‘things’” (Taylor 1992: 163). Similarly, junk feminist collaging employs everyday objects such as internet parody images in this study, in order to interrupt notions of appropriate and worthy research material. Junk in this sense implies crap and scrap, which is brought under investigation creatively in a similar manner as the early twentieth century collagists (such as Picasso) used collage “in their work to counter the representational demands of formalist art [... and] to question political and social agendas of the times” (Butler-Kisber & Poldma 2010: 3).

Junk feminist collaging is also related to and akin Benjamin’s archival work whereby “[c]ollections unlock themselves once a single piece is brought to voice” and the archive consists of scraps or ‘scrappy paperwork’ which emphasizes on one hand fragmentariness but on the other a way of making information manageable (Marx et al. 2007: 2, 4)

The use of everyday images as research material and illustrations also aims, as did the early collagists, for greater accessibility. Collages are as much reproductions as productions, by using one of the most famous collagists, Picasso, as an example Taylor points out: “By using materials that are already prints, Picasso (re)created a work that is as much a reproduction as a production. The world that appears in the work of art is the fabricated world of industry that is always already figured.” (Taylor 1992: 163-4) My collages utilize everyday internet imagery and abstract theorizing can become concrete in new ways through these productive and playful reproductions employing everyday imagery. Furthermore, on a conceptual level borders between different theoretical and thematic elements may seem intact and even impermeable, yet collaging creates unexpected juxtapositions which can alter meanings and enable new relationships to be imagined or invented (Sylvester 2009: 170). Junk feminist collaging politicizes and re-politicizes everyday imageries and internet junk joyfully.

Constant feminist critique is a process and a project that means always remaining critical and always questioning binaries and dichotomies, such as good/bad feminism, seriousness/humor, masculine/feminine (and all of the other binaries that follow from this/ are underpinned by gender). In other words, practicing junk feminism is to be attentive to our constant relying on binary constructions in the everyday and the ways in which devalorization of the feminine always underpins and undermines one side of the dichotomy thus creating, recreating and upholding hierarchies (cf. Peterson 2009, 2010, 2011). Additionally, it means being attentive to the attempts of internal policing and gatekeeping within IR feminisms. This is not to say that anything goes as feminism. Channeling bell hooks (2000) I do believe feminism is for everyone, but not everyone claiming to be feminist necessarily is, nor is feminism the same for everyone.

Academia is structured in such a way that there is pay-offs for stomping on each other and each other's careers. To practice junk feminism in the everyday is to resist these tendencies; it is to self-reflect and to examine internalized sexism, racism and other prejudices while recognizing those axes of differentiation where one comes off as privileged. It means taking account of privileges, listening to, and taking seriously the concerns of those less privileged.

### 3 Junk feminism

This chapter delves deeper into what the theoretical position I have named junk feminism consists of and entails. Or rather, the chapter presents a theoretical collage that brings together and juxtaposes the theoretical elements and strands that I have found most useful and fruitful for addressing the issue of nuclear wannabes. The chapter proceeds by introducing the theoretical-normative background for my work and then moves on to elaborating a junk feminist approach to nuclear proliferation after which three theoretical positionings are explored. Firstly, gender as hierarchical and performative, followed by world politics popular culture nexus, and lastly laughter as a political sentiment.

#### 3.1 A feminist approach to nuclear proliferation

The normative position of this work situates it in the tradition of feminist anti-militarism or anti-war feminism, which draws from both the women's movement and peace movement. According to anti-war or anti-militarist position, neither military nor political use of nuclear weapons is acceptable. In other words, nuclear weapons should not be used in warfare nor for deterrence. The reliance on nuclear weapons is seen as a significant part of militarism that is the culture of readiness and enthusiasm for war, which is pervasive in the political operations of many states.

What makes the anti-militarist perspective feminist is the attention to the roles gender plays in various war-related, war-preparatory, and war-based meaning makings. Gender as cultural logic permeates and shapes our understanding of politics, war, and weaponry including how nuclear weapons are thought about and deployed. Hence, making gender visible in relation to nuclear proliferation is a crucial step for feminist anti-militarism involving deep criticism of the ways in which

discourses of nuclear proliferation and nuclear weapons are framed. (cf. Cohn 1993; Cohn & Ruddick 2004; Duncanson & Eschle 2008) This move denaturalizes taken for granted cultural logics underpinning global hierarchies. Without denaturalization and constant vigilant criticism, we cannot even begin to imagine a world beyond the gender hierarchy nor global politics without nuclear weapons.

Rather than taking gender as solely an empirical category, it is here understood as an analytical one. Gender as an analytical lens refers to the signifying system of masculine-feminine differentiations that constitutes a governing code. This means that gender as cultural logic systematically naturalizes and structures power relations. Global politics is infused with gendered cultural logic following from the ways in which individual and collective identities are constructed around and through social characteristics assumed to be related to male/female sexual difference. This gendered cultural logic does not merely map onto various aspects of the world, it is an integral part of meaning production. To be intelligible, persons, political entities, concepts, and ideas necessarily have characteristics that are associated either with masculinity or with femininity. The association between various characteristics and masculinity-femininity differentiations is by no means a neutral one, because there is a well-documented history of privileging and valorizing that, which is perceived as masculine over that which is perceived as feminine. In other words, gender is hierarchical. (Duncanson & Eschle 2008; Peterson 2010; Sjoberg and Via 2010.)

Gender is hierarchical, because masculinity and femininity are interdependent and relational. Or rather, gender as cultural logic consists of multiple forms of masculinities and femininities in plural, not in singular. To say that masculinities and femininities are interdependent and relational means that neither exist without the other and that one side of the dichotomy requires the other. Insistence on the interdependency of both sides of the gender dichotomy displaces the deeply rooted belief that gender is mainly about women. (cf. Duncanson & Eschle 2008; Peterson 2010.) Conflating gender and women, as often happens not only in popular discourse but also in academic discussions on the place and role of feminist research in IR, is problematic because it implies that only women have gender and that they only should be concerned about gender inequality or gendered oppression. Yet, gender hierarchy is restrictive to both sexes. Furthermore, this conflation insinuates that the issues and concerns raised by feminists in IR and elsewhere should only be addressed by women.



To reiterate, gender is both about women and men, and both women and men participate in the hierarchical gender system and are complicit in its reproduction. None of us can escape this system, but with vigilant criticism, we can try to transform it for better.

As stated above, discourses and imageries about nuclear weapons are infused with a series of conceptual dichotomies, which flow from and underpin masculinity-femininity differentiations (Duncanson & Eschle 2008). Characteristics and concepts that are conventionally associated with masculinity include, for example, strength, objectivity, rationality, aggression, domination, confrontation, public life, control, order, and leadership. These are oppositional to and privileged over those characteristics and concepts associated with femininity, including ones such as weakness, subjectivity, emotion, passivity, submission, accommodation, privacy, uncertainty, chaos, and care. (Cohn 1993; Sjoberg & Via 2010) Gender as cultural logic, which privileges and valorizes masculine characteristics while devaluing the feminine ones is key to naturalizing symbolic, discursive, cultural, corporeal, material, and economic power relations (cf. Peterson 2009). That is not to say that valorizing masculinities privileges all men or only men. Rather, the claim is that a person, state, or organization attributed with masculine characteristics are positioned as more powerful than those associated with feminine ones are. Therefore, understanding global politics as gender hierarchical entails recognizing that there are pay-offs in being able to masculinize the self and feminize the other.

Roots of anti-war feminisms lie in the women's movement and peace movement. Thus, there are many linkages and collaborations between research and activism that have contributed to the development of the anti-militarist feminist perspective to nuclear weapons. This has led to taking activists and their concerns and views seriously as international actors and as legitimate sources of knowledge.<sup>9</sup>

Considering that nuclear weapons have immense destructive power and that developing the weapons is very costly, for long, anti-nuclear activists have challenged the decisions made by political leaders about armament. Furthermore, the activist

---

<sup>9</sup> Conventional IR approaches are state-centric and thus it is taken as a given that the international belongs to the states, and by extension to the political elites representing the state in various international arenas. Realist approaches emphasize the role of nuclear weapons in the international system in terms of material power and interests, constructivist approaches focus on norms and identities, and psychological approaches focus on foreign policy elites and how foreign policy elites' worldviews influence the decisions concerning whether to proliferate or not.



stance implicitly posits that the international belongs to the people, to all of us, rather than just to the states and their high-level official representatives.

IR, as well as other academic disciplines are “powerful mechanisms that direct and control the production and diffusion of knowledge” (Bleiker 2001). Not only does mainstream IR assume that the international belongs to the states and elites, it also is complicit in reproducing the problems it claims to solve. In this case, rather than solving the problem of nuclear proliferation “the house of IR” participates in the processes of erasing politics from the global nuclear order, and more broadly imposing and sustaining a problematic neoliberal world order based on politics of exclusion and violence (Agathangelou & Ling 2009). In other words, the house of IR forms an epistemic community with the political elites, scholars providing rationale for the decisions the political elites undertake. So in this epistemic community, scholars from the top floors of the house of IR, i.e. the ones from the more mainstream-ish schools of thought, settle into the machiavellian role of advising the rulers so they can rule their states and the world more effectively.

The conventional ways of conceptualizing nuclear proliferation in the field of IR function as a pre-emptive discourse, delimiting what kind of questions are asked, what are considered as suitable sources and research material, and what counts as reliable ways of approaching the material (cf. Cohn 1987a; Cohn 1993). IR with its internal power relations has established rules and limits of intellectual exchange and defined the methods, techniques, and instruments that are considered proper for the pursuit of knowledge, which feminists have extensively critiqued and challenged. While these rules do indeed provide meaning, coherence and stability by normalizing certain practices, they limit what can be asked, thought, talked, and written.

In order to think through the issue of nuclear proliferation in new ways it needs to be recognized that “the international operates in spheres other than the heroic domains of state action and high politics prescribed by existing scholarly conventions” (Bleiker 2001). If this claim is to be taken seriously, not only will activists be seen as relevant actors and sources of knowledge in and about global politics but also the everyday will become important. Consequently, the conventional notion of policy relevance needs to be challenged.

If the international belongs to the people and operates also elsewhere than in the spheres it is conventionally associated with, it follows that the scholars’ responsibility to produce relevant knowledge is broader than is usually conceived (cf. Aalto et al.

2011: 5-11). The contemporary scholarly self-image adopted by many, that is the machiavellian role of an advisor to the prince, who produce relevant predictive analysis for the use of political elites and state officials, is simply not sufficient. We need to let go of the self-importance that this kind of self-image often brings and broaden the perspectives on who we write for and think about questions of accessibility. If we are to be responsible in providing relevant knowledge for people beyond academia and political elites, we need to think about modes of expression and critically examine the conventions of academic writing. Junk feminist collaging, which builds on three broad theoretical strands, which are introduced later in this chapter and will be further developed methodologically in the next chapter, is my personal answer on how to navigate these questions of responsibility, accessibility, and relevance.

### 3.2 A junk feminist approach to nuclear proliferation

Building on the tradition of anti-war feminism and feminist anti-militarism my junk feminist approach to nuclear proliferation and especially nuclear wannabes Iran and North Korea starts from a place of dissatisfaction with the tools IR offers as have so many feminists before me.<sup>10</sup> IR can be “as much a sensory experience as pedagogical, theoretical, [or] professional” experience (Sylvester 2009: 180) and junk feminism as a specific practice of IR is a way of engaging all these experiences while remaining attuned to the issues of power related to them.

When looking at the popular imaginations of nuclear proliferation the focus shifts from security and state-centrism to world ordering where political sentiments such as worry, compassion, and laughter come into play in constituting the boundaries of the human polity. Visions of world order and civilizational discourses are evoked in order to delineate who can and who cannot have nuclear weapons, i.e. who belongs and who does not belong within the human polity. Gendered, sexualized, and

---

<sup>10</sup> Conventional state-centric modes of explaining and understanding nuclear proliferation in IR miss something significant when the issue is framed in terms of power politics, material resources, and prestige, or as a security question and the focus is on rational-cognitive models. That is to say, it misses the polymodality of knowledge and how world politics are sensed.

racialized imageries play an important role in these inclusions and exclusions. These imageries also contribute to the constitution of the conditions of possibility and impossibility, where policy choices take place. The imageries and imaginations, and importantly in some cases the lack of visuals, function in framing and presenting different options as plausible and others not desirable.

States are often characterized in anthropomorphic terms in both popular and academic discourse and the state is more often than not gendered male rhetorically in the descriptions of legal and political interactions between states (Ruskola 2010: 1479, see also e.g. Tickner 1992, Hooper 2001). For example, in editorial cartoons, various states are embodied by caricatures of their leaders who more often than not are men. Consequently, there often exists obvious visual association with maleness and statehood. Yet, gendering the state male usually goes unnoticed because of the expectation that abstract concepts are gender neutral and furthermore because gender is usually associated with women not men. Gendering of the state usually only becomes visible when it is gendered female, think of for example the maiden of Finland or mother Russia.

There are debates in IR whether the state is a person or person-like entity and does the question matter (e.g. *Review of International Studies* 2004 issue 2). I have no stakes in that particular theoretical debate, but it is noteworthy example because gender does not feature in it even when the state is understood as a 'real' person or a person-like entity. Ignoring the ways in which anthropomorphism is always also gendered means not recognizing how the key actors of global politics are "defined and differentiated by their relationship to norms of masculinity and femininity" (Wadley 2009: 38). This applies whether the key actors are understood to be states only, or to include political leaders, international organizations, NGOs and so on. What the state personhood debate tells us at a glance is that anthropomorphism continues to be integral to IR, but even more significant that in lay discourses of global politics personification of states is inescapable (cf. Luoma-aho 2009: 294). In other words, the personification is an intrinsic feature of our everyday understandings of states. Time and time again the states are depicted as having characteristics of individuals when they interact with other states in the global arenas. For example, it is possible for a state to act like a man or to act like a woman, or the state can be characterized with more specific attributes as a bully, a madman or a wimp. These descriptions are enabled by the fact that the arenas in which states and

other actors engage each other are saturated with gendered meanings (Wadley 2009: 39).

Gender analysis is entirely possible and plausible even when sexed bodies not present (cf. Kinsella 2003: 296), especially when gender is not seen as only an empirical category, but rather as relational and hierarchical cultural logic. A wider understanding of political bodies than the state-as-a-person discussion implies can further displace state-centrism taken for granted by so much IR and criticized by feminists and other critical scholars. Consequently, widening the notion of political bodies can point us towards questions of gendered and sexualized word orderings.

Political bodies, widely understood, can range from the individual all the way to human polity, the widest possible political body. This conceptualization enables fruitful gateways into world politics as sensory experience and political sentiments, such as laughter. Bodily processes and political sentiments come together in iconically readable ways in many classic representations such as paintings and other artwork and the boundaries of representability can be thematized by looking at art (cf. Aaltola 2009; Sylvester 2009). Internet parody images might not be as iconic, but equally they offer concrete and accessible representations. Indeed, internet parody images may even be more accessible than art, because there are no implicit or explicit assumptions that one has to have training to be able to say something about an image, unlike when looking at and interpreting art.

When political bodies are not understood in the conventional state-centric sense to be metaphors for states, they are seen to include various formations from the individual, to the state, to the hegemon, to human polity. This is to say that we all live in and are constituted by a diversity of bodies. As Marysia Zalewski (2013: 28) reminds us by citing Donna Haraway, bodies do not necessarily have to end at the skin. Various sensations, sentiments and emotions are attached to the range of political bodies. To be in and of the world is a sensory experience in which not only the suffering and agony, but also joy and happiness, of our individual bodies are felt by others and vice versa. Our individual bodies are equally capable of twisting and shaking because of pain and fear as they are of laughter and passion. As Aaltola argues:

“We feel through and with the other bodies [...] world politics, and especially sentiments for the distant others, provides the largest possible context for such felt and lived bodies. The longing for the distant other has provided

much of the fuel for charitable, compassionate, and colonial impulses. From orientalism to modern-day humanitarianism, the relationship between the top and the bottom of the world hierarchy has resulted in a lot of political imagery.” (Aaltola 2009: 3)

While language of bodily pain and disease often used to describe communities, regions, and empires can be revelatory in the sense that it is intelligible as constitutive of a particular power hierarchy, laughter and humor also function in similar manner. Because gender is hierarchical and relational it can be highly relevant for examining the political significance of this language and imagery, which evokes specific sentiments, as it “deals with securing communities at a level that is rarely quite cognitive” (Aaltola 2009: 2). Shifts in power hierarchies, such as world orders, can cause worry because changes are understood as contagious. On the other hand, shifts in power hierarchies can also cause joyful anticipation. To give a few examples of moments when shifts in power hierarchies cause various sentiments to arise: Think of a western spectator on 9/11 and the worry the falling towers caused in contrast with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the sentiments that it stirred up. Alternatively, think of nuclear weapons in early 1990s and the sense of relief when proliferation seemed to be reducing and under control more than ever before. Then think of the moment in 1998 when this “golden era” ended as India and Pakistan engaged in nuclear testing.<sup>11</sup> When the global power hierarchies are in danger of shifting and shaking the world order itself becomes a body in pain, at least for those who wish to maintain the status quo, for some it might be a joyous body politics shaking with laughter while hierarchies are undone and rearranged.

Cultural logic of gender plays into these sentiments when changes in the hierarchy mean that relative power positions shift through various forms of feminizations and masculinizations.

Violent shakes such as the towers falling on 9/11 threaten “the hegemonic, hierarchical order of things that had defined post-cold war prosperity [and] had many names besides the obvious one, such as ‘international community,’ ‘civilized nations,’ ‘the West,’ and ‘democracies’” (Aaltola 2009: 4). The identification with and

---

<sup>11</sup> Nuclear proliferation is often conceptualized in terms of contagion, even according to the conventional wisdom in IR horizontal nuclear proliferation change the dynamics of the hierarchy constituting the world order, but this change is affected by shifts in relative power and based on material resources. Moreover, there is lot of worry implicitly present in mainstream formulations, but it is not openly addressed.

compassion for the hegemonic power in many ensuing popular and academic accounts contributed to the maintenance of the prevalent power hierarchy. Worry over the existing order of things can often overcome compassion for the victims (cf. Aaltola 2009), but these sentiments remain unaddressed in scholarly work.

The sentiments involved in research processes, the politics of and the “I” doing and writing the research are not customarily addressed in IR. Positionality of the researcher - how her individual political body relates to the wider political bodies - plays a part in how various sentiments are felt and directed. Relative privilege or the lack thereof influences the ways in which we are in and of the world. The personal, indeed, is international and to make sense of it all we have to read power to multiple directions, backwards, forwards and sideways (cf. Enloe 1989: 195-6; Sylvester 2002). Navigating the myriad intersecting privileges and oppressions in relation to the various political bodies is where collage-thinking and junk feminism can be extremely useful.

Knowledge production is embodied and the various political bodies we are all connected to affect the processes of knowledge production. For example, take the role of compassion in contemporary world politics: even in the world-order-oriented cosmopolitan human polity, nation-state-bodies are often the most important object of compassion. While we can feel for near and/or distant others as individuals, nations, or empires and hegemons, we often feel for and identify with the nation-state-body we seem to quite naturally belong to. Furthermore,

“the inherently political existence of an individual body should not be forgotten or underestimated. We are engaged with individual bodies other than our own. Images ranging from the plight of a starving person in Africa to a celebrity dying in a car crash move us. Gendered and racialized bodies provide ways of understanding the political existence of our individual bodies. “I”s are always part of political hierarchies even when they are deliberately excluded from them, as some singular cases of “terrorists” from the Unabomber to the shoe bomber show [...] political embodiments comprise the bedrock of our existence” (Aaltola 2009: 5)

Not only do gendered, sexualized and racialized bodies provide ways of understanding the political existence of individual bodies, but they also provide understanding of the various collective bodies. When we talk about political bodies, it is crucial to take these aspects into account. Especially individual bodies do not exist outside these categorizations of differentiation, although from privileged



position it might appear so. When one embodies the norm, e.g. male, heterosexual, and white, it is difficult to see oneself as gendered, sexualized and racialized. That is all the more reason for us to interrogate our own privileges when we claim to know something about the world and about the international.

There is a danger on focusing solely on bodies. As Christine Sylvester reminds us referring to Terry Eagleton “that just as class, race, and gender enter the canons of literary and cultural studies, we become obsessed more with the body than with issues of social justice. The body we obsess over is attached to people who sort of look like us or could be us if we tried harder to match their bodies. Their bodies are seen to be heavily constructed and often badly designed as they romp through film, chick lit, Web pages, and popular magazines -- the new places of cultural data.” (Sylvester 2009) We need to resist this sort of political amnesia that sidetracks us from the social justice issues. Accordingly, life-and-death issues can become masked by the obsessive shallowness of focusing only on categorizing the bodies and worrying about representations. The notion of political bodies attempts to keep the politics foregrounded in each constellation ranging from the individual to the human polity.

Forgetting bodies is similarly a dangerous affair as an exclusive focus on them. IR often tends to be disembodied, but we have to remember that knowledge is embodied and that embodiment necessarily ties us into categories of differentiation, and that privileges and oppressions operate within these categorizations. To be uncritical of our privileges and complicities means that the analysis more often than not “winds up expressing taken-for-granted politics that side with the rulers, with the powerful, with the imperialists, and not with the downtrodden, the weak, the colonised, or the post-colonised” (Barkawi & Laffey 2006: 344). As the aim of critically inclined scholarship with emancipatory knowledge interests, scholarship such as anti-war feminism / feminist anti-militarism and junk feminism, is to side with the underdog, we have to be mindful of the ways in which we may end up siding with the powerful or supporting existing problematic power hierarchies. Otherwise we always slip back to “All these theories yet the bodies keep piling up” (Zalewski 1996)!

This demand for criticality vis-à-vis our personal privileges and complicities brings me again to the notion of policy relevance. When policy relevance understood narrowly and scholars’ interests are “to shore up and defend the interests of the

powerful, this may not be an issue” (Barkawi & Laffey 2006: 344). That is when the role and self-image of a scholar producing politically relevant research is akin to the Machiavellian advisor to the prince it appears that there is no need for critical examination of one’s positionalities and privileges. For feminist and other critical scholarship, however, “the concern may be to support and defend the weak” (Barkawi & Laffey 2006: 344) and to transform the existing social orders that continue to exploit and oppress the weak (cf. Ackerly & True 2010: 2). Thus, also the notion of policy relevance has to be understood in broader terms. In other words, we must attempt to produce knowledge that is relevant in other ways than as recommendations to policy-makers.

I imagine the relevance of my junk feminist collaging project in following ways. Most importantly, I aim to provide a theoretical and methodological framework for addressing our everyday understandings of world political things in the contemporary internet era. Secondly, the parody images and collages can make abstract theorizing about gendered and sexualized nuclear proliferation more easily accessible for wider audience, and can teach the reader/viewer to pay attention to these kind of images in the everyday. Furthermore, making various gendered and sexualized constructions visible can disturb the ways in which they are normalized and naturalized every day and this is the first step in any kind of critical transformative project. Lastly, my more modest aim lies in the everyday academic practices of reading and writing and is to bring some joy to the reader through the engagement with the humorous in world politics.

What is central to the wider notion of policy relevance, or just the relevance of the research, is research ethic. If and when one subscribes to critical feminist research ethic, the research will be relevant. Attentiveness to power and to boundaries, intersections, and normalizations are key elements of critical feminist research ethic (Ackerly & True 2010: 12) and they require and enable exploration of privileges of our personal political bodies along with those of the wider political bodies we belong to. Personal is international (cf. Enloe 1989: 196) in the ways in which our individual political bodies relate to and resonate with the wider political bodies. To make sense of the international and all the relations it entails, and of the various political bodies from human polity to the individual and back we need to read power backwards and forwards (cf. *ibid*; Sylvester 2002: 16).



IR is a cultural practice that imposes order on the world it studies. Especially its mainstream variants, when siding with the rulers and the powerful, play a significant role in reproducing “violent cartographies” or “geopolitical imaginaries [...] that constitute the frames within which enmities give rise to war-as-policy” (Shapiro 2009: 19). These frames are based on historically developed and socially embedded interpretations of identity and space. Because of IR’s role in the reproduction of these frames the critique of violence and militarism needs to be directed also to IR itself and the ways in which it is complicit in producing the violent cartographies. This is why the feminist anti-militarist approach (along with other feminist IR approaches) keeps a critical eye on both the world political phenomena it studies and on IR discipline at the same time.

The ways in which distances and proximities are mapped, understood and sensed in relation to nuclear proliferation are part of wider geopolitical frames and cartographies. As Shapiro aptly points out geography is inextricably linked to the architecture of enmity (2009: 19). The architecture of enmity is not my main concern here. It is, however, related because undoubtedly the construction of threats is an important issue in regards to nuclear proliferation, especially when dealing with the so called rogue states or the ‘axis of evil’ as the nuclear wannabes have so often been named in the post 9/11 era by both politicians and scholars.

Junk feminist collaging is one way of tracing and recreating alternative imaginaries to the conventional ways of constructing global security problematics. One way, not the one and only answer.

Global security problematics have been the forte of security studies, a subfield of IR. Although locate myself and junk feminist collaging within the broader framework of transdisciplinary IR feminisms rather than as a Feminists Security Studies (FSS) scholar, critical approaches from security studies (feminist and non-feminist) have relevance for this study. Furthermore, I realize that I am guilty of reproducing some of the problematics that conventional security studies has relied on, namely the Eurocentric historical geographies (cf. Barkawi & Laffey 2006: 334). I do, on the one hand attempt to challenge “the taken-for-granted chronologies of key actors, central processes and frameworks that organise the world in spatial terms and locate these actors, processes, and events, both in relation to each other and to world politics more generally” (ibid). On the other hand, however, the location, lived experienced,

and training pose limitations for this writing “I” and forces the work to remain in the fields still dominated by anglo-american/western perspectives and discourses.

My work is by default Eurocentric, in that the raw material, i.e. the internet parody images, originates in the west and also the theories, literatures and discussions engaged with are of and from the west. I do, however, make use of these limitations and examine some of the taken-for-granted privileges when turning the gaze ‘inward’ into the ways in which we, as westerners, try to make sense of those “others” aspiring nuclear weapons. After all, we as westerners are collectively on top of the world, ordering it to our liking and benefiting from the history and the current, which has enabled our privileges. For example, security studies is conventionally based on Eurocentric imagined geographies and histories and consists of mutually reinforcing set of claims, assertions, and presuppositions that enables the West to imagine itself “as the ethical actor in world politics” no matter how murderous it might be or have been (Barkawi & Laffey 2006: 343). This “ethical” self-image of the West and especially of the U.S. became strikingly clear after the killing of Osama Bin-Laden in early May of 2011, when other Western leaders echoed President Obama’s remarks calling the event justice that finally happened. Further, when some Americans took to the streets to celebrate the event it was in the mainstream media presented as just fine, unlike when similar celebrations have been taking place elsewhere (e.g. Middle East) and they have been condemned and seen as acts of barbarism.

Understanding that conventional security studies scholarship part-takes in the reinforcement of this kind of self-image of the West is a crucial step towards critical self-examination, which is necessary for countering this trend. If we aim at responsible scholarship that is politically salient in a far wider sense than policy relevance is usually understood, we need to start recognizing our privileges and complicity in the production of the hierarchies that continue to place us on the top.

As a final note, before moving on to the actual theoretical positionings, I would like to remark that the critical gaze I’m arguing for also needs to be directed at feminism and IR feminisms. That is to say, that feminism does not come without package either. The so-called mainstream feminism, that is feminism that is most publicly visible in, for example, Western mainstream media, can be hugely problematic and ignorant of its own privileges. Because of its visibility, mainstream feminism can appear as setting the feminist agenda and when most of the mainstream feminists are white, educated, straight, (upper) middle class western women with their

particular concerns, the feminist agenda becomes limited. The internet has made it more possible than ever for various feminists to publish their thoughts this opens up huge possibilities for complicated and challenging discussions on what the feminist agendas are beyond the work-life balance which seems to be the main concern of contemporary mainstream feminism (see. e.g. Sandberg 2013; Slaughter 2012).

In similar way as mainstream feminism, feminist IR scholarship is not an entity that would magically “get it right” (unlike conventional IR or traditional security studies feminists have criticized). The thing is that when we claim to know the international, our privileges may enable us to conclude that something is universal even though it is highly particular only to those of us who are privileged on many axis. Western white academic feminists might, for example, claim to know how oppression of women works in the international as a whole, but might miss a lot of nuances and differences in various localities, while claiming to speak for all women everywhere. This is not to say that we cannot understand others’ experiences, but simply a reminder on not to impose meanings before listening and paying attention. Listen to LHM Ling, who directs criticism against (some) feminist IR: “some feminists implicitly rely on international institutions to redress domestic gender inequities [...and some] turn to (Western) international organizations to save the day. Nevertheless, this hope for external salvation tends to wish away an unremitting patriarchy that underlies liberal capitalism, thereby further entrenching women into globalized sexual division of labor. Equally troubling is a lack of reflection on Self/Other divides within and among feminists. Feminists in the West may protest patriarchy’s ‘othering’ of gender but overlook or dismiss their own acts of othering, especially along racial and cultural lines, under the banner of global sisterhood.” (Ling 2002: 52). As an example, take the mainstream feminism discussed above; when “the feminist agenda” centers around the work-life balance discussion, other voices and agendas are drowned out and women whose problems arise from not only gender, but also from other categories of differentiation (race, class, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity) and their intersections are made invisible.

In academic discussions, very concretely, the othering can happen in citation and publishing practices (not always, maybe not even often, intentionally). Who do we read and listen to, who do we cite, who do we invite to workshops, special issues, and edited books? How do we set agendas for IR feminisms, for feminist security studies? To whom do these agendas speak to, who do they include and exclude?

It is all so complicated and messy, but isn't it always?

### 3.3 Theoretical positionings part 1: gender as hierarchical and performative

As described in the first part of this chapter, gender is understood in this work as both relational and hierarchical. In other words, femininities and masculinities exist in a hierarchical relation to each other where that which is associated with the masculine is constantly privileged over that which is considered feminine. Furthermore, gender is understood to be performative, that is it is continually reproduced through repetition and performances of gender that happen at every moment. Because gender is hierarchical and performative, it is an analytical category or lens, a theoretical tool, which can help us to understand the dynamics of changing power hierarchies and the sentiments related to the shifts and shakes in world orders. Gender is not an accidental, but integral, feature of global politics including diplomatic, military and economic relations (Connell 2008). Moreover, gender matters because it “continues to saturate our cultural, political, personal and international imaginations and daily lives” (Zalewski & Parpart 2008: 3).

Gender as a theoretical tool or an analytical lens together with visual collage methodology form the core of junk feminist collaging and enable us to see and to make visible “how the world is shaped by gendered concepts, practices, and institutions” (Peterson & Runyan 1993: 1). Collaging the internet parody images of wannabe nuclear states can make abstract theoretizations of gender in world politics strikingly visible and thus more easily accessible.

It is useful to remember, of course, that any given theoretical tool or analytical lens necessarily directs our focus to some particular elements at the expense of others. An explicit focus on gender might blur from the view how sexuality and race, for example, play an important ordering function in world politics. Transdisciplinary junk feminist collaging requires attentiveness to the intersections of various other

categories with gender, for example sexuality, race and ethnicity, class, age, and so on. Together these categories and their various intersections form intricate networks of oppressions and privileges. Reading power to multiple directions in these complex hierarchies entails recognizing how, for example, I as an individual political body and a spectator of parodies of nuclear wannabes, am positioned in the various other constellations of political bodies (national, hegemonic, human polity) as more and less powerful than some others.

Gender lens is not only a theoretical tool utilized by feminist academics, but also everyday phenomena. That is to say that gender lens is, often unconsciously, present in our everyday interpretations of the world. Unexamined and unquestioned ideas about gender affect the way we are in and of the world, how we see the world, the questions we ask as researchers or as 'real/normal' people in the everyday and the answers we can envision to them. For example, gender frames the ways in which politicians are seen and their actions are judged.

The task of feminists scholars, therefore, is to expose these often invisible and unconscious lenses and unpack the taken-for-granted assumptions about gender that pervade the way in which women and men politicians are represented and judged (cf. Schwartz and Rutter 1998). Especially women politicians are often seen to be making decisions as women, consequently the decisions they make and the policies they craft are seen as made by women and thus partial and not universally applicable unlike the decisions made and policies crafted by men. To reiterate, men as politicians are often seen to represent the will of the people as a whole, or the interests of the whole nation, while women politicians represent the interests of a limited group, namely women or 'mother citizens' (cf. Kuusipalo 2011).

This picture is further complicated by the gender performance of both men and women politicians. For men it can be quite straight forward, when a man politician's gender performance fits the norm, i.e. he effectively performs hegemonic masculinity (whatever attributes that may consist of in a given locality and point in time), he easily settles into the role of a neutral and universal advocate. For women it is more of a no-win-situation: a woman politician has to be feminine enough, yet not too feminine. Well dressed and pretty women in politics (and in academia too!) are perceived as lacking credibility, while women in powerful positions such as Hillary Clinton or Tarja Halonen were fiercely criticized when they did not put enough effort on their looks. Clinton dared to appear in public wearing her hair on

a ponytail, or wearing glasses or not enough make-up and Halonen held a handbag too large or even wore a sports cap at a sports event or at a music festival. There are numerous examples that could be listed here and questions that could be investigated a lot further. For example, how age, race, class, or ethnicity plays into the ways in which women (and men) politicians are perceived and judged. It might well be that for young women the demands to be conventionally feminine are even greater and that older women get more slack in this regard. Moreover, all this body and appearance policing directed at women who are public figures steers the discussion away from their politics.

Gender can be easier to spot and start unpacking when we look at realms where both men and women are present. However, when it comes to highly masculinist or exclusively masculine spheres or exclusively feminine spheres, they seem to have nothing to do with gender. This is precisely because gender is so overtly present that it goes easily unseen and it makes it hard to grasp gender when it is so “in your face”. Take the military, for example, it easily appears that gender (and gender politics) had no place in the military before its door were opened to women. Yet, military is the place where “boys are made into men”. How is this, then, not about gender? Indeed, issues pertaining to militarized masculinities are among the favorite topics of IR feminisms. Again, in a more everyday discussions gender keeps getting conflated with women.

Gender is the central, but not the only, category of analysis for feminist research.

Feminist research, as social sciences more generally, can be said to be constituted by knowledge interest of emancipation, whereby even theoretical investigations have practical relevance. Critical examination of specific cultural logics, concepts, or discourses, is essential for trying to imagine alternatives from which academics, activists, and/or policy makers could proceed from (cf. Shepherd 2008: 5). In addition, “[g]ender-critical analysis can open up political discussion of similarity and difference across the institutional and everyday boundaries of gender” (Carver 1996: 15). To put this in the language of political bodies, junk feminist analysis, which treats gender as hierarchical and performative, can reveal how it functions across the various constellations of political bodies from the individual to the human polity.

Feminists might not all agree on the same definition of gender, but do agree that there is a history and constancy to this hierarchy of masculine over feminine, which do not exist independently from, but in relation to, each other, one being defined as



the negation of the other (e.g. Zalewski 1995: 341; Duncanson & Eschle 2008: 546). The relation is a dichotomous one and the two opposite terms are thus constituted as mutually exclusive, yet complementary. For example, concepts that are in western culture associated with masculinity and femininity, respectively, *inter alia*, mind-body, culture-nature, thought-feeling, logic-intuition, objectivity-subjectivity, rationality-irrationality, order-chaos, aggression-passivity, confrontation-accommodation, abstraction-particularity, public-private, political-personal (e.g. Cohn 1993: 229). These pairings, along with various other dichotomies and their association with masculinity and femininity, organize western thought (Lloyd 1984; Wilcox 2009: 65). While none of us, as “women” and “men”, really fit the gender ideals, i.e. the “constellation of meanings that a given culture assigns to biological sex differences” the existence of these ideals and the hierarchy they form affects us, nonetheless (Cohn 1993: 228-9).

Feminist theorizing has to large extent arisen from the needs of women’s movement and thus “we can say that feminism’s use of gender has an intimate relationship with women and woman” (Zalewski 2003: 292). Also, gender is often “marked” on women (*ibid*; Carver 2003) and men are perceived as genderless. However, gender is by no means a synonym for women (Carver 1996).

Conflating gender and women, as often happens not only in popular discourse but also in academic discussions on the place and role of feminist research in IR, is problematic because it implies that only women have gender and that they only should be concerned about gender inequality or gendered oppression. Furthermore, this conflation insinuates that the issues and concerns raised by feminists in IR and elsewhere should only be addressed by women. This keeps happening. Not too long ago at a conference, there was a discussant, who in an informal discussion after the panel said that men doing feminist IR must all be gay. How on earth would a straight man be interested in feminism, right?

Wrong. Both women and men have and do (perform) gender, and both women and men participate in the hierarchical gender system and are complicit in its reproduction. That is to say, both women and men tend to value that which is associated with masculinity higher than that associated with femininity (e.g. Sjoberg 2009: 3). Gender, e.g. what is seen as proper femininity and masculinity, can be restrictive to both men and women. For this reason alone, one would think men could and should be interested in analyzing critically how gender functions. But then

again, it is like the aforementioned discussant said, most are happy with their privilege and not willing to give any of it up. Because they see demands for equality as a zero-sum game and not as something that would benefit us all.

It might sound like a radical idea that feminism aims at benefiting men, too, because it differs from the common-sensical understanding of feminism (you know, those man-haters who want to take over the world). The process of denaturalizing and critiquing gendered cultural logics are central to feminist emancipatory politics which aim at not only ending women's oppression, but also to remove the restrictions posed on both women and men by the gender hierarchy. The hierarchical gender structure is restrictive, because "to exhibit a trait on that list [of dichotomies above] is not neutral -- it is not simply displaying some basic human characteristic" (Cohn 1993: 229). Exhibiting a certain trait situates an individual in a discourse of gender, in other words associates one with femininity or masculinity and thus with higher or lower value.

The restrictions posed on us each by gender are violent in that they delimit self-expression. In Butlerian terms, the gender ideals, or the gender norms, perform "mundane violence" in constituting some expressions of gender acceptable and others not (Butler 2008/1990: xxi-xxii). For an individual this might mean that you have to perform specific type of femininity or masculinity in order to be taken seriously in an academic setting, for example. But it is also something more profound that is at stake: the acceptable gender expressions, in other words "normative gender presumptions", fix the boundaries of "the very field of description that we have for the human" (ibid.:xxiii). This is to say that, they "establish what will and will not be considered to be 'real,' they establish the ontological field in which bodies may be given legitimate expression" (ibid.: xxv).

To not adhere to the prevalent gender norms may in some situations be dangerous, life threatening even. Thus, life is foreclosed when "naturalized knowledge of gender operates as a preemptive and violent circumscription of reality" (ibid: xxiv). The seriousness of this cannot be overemphasized because those perceived as less-than-human, because they don't quite fit the binary gender ideals, are more likely to be subjected to violence and violent death (e.g. Butler 2004: 6). In contemporary world politics one can find relations international (not international relations in this case, because these sort of fly under the radar of official inter-national politics), for example the recent example of policies in Uganda making homosexuality punishable



by a death sentence and some U.S. right wing fundamental evangelical christians actively supporting such measures. Scary indication, indeed, who are deemed less-than-human, and whose lives are grievable and whose are not.

Without first denaturalizing the gendered cultural logics, we cannot begin to imagine “a world beyond the confines of gender hierarchy” (cf. Carver 2008: 110). This denaturalizing can happen on various different levels, my project is not so much about individual bodies but various constellations of political bodies and at the level of the international. The parody imagery under inspection is one realm where the policing of gender boundaries happens.

For a junk feminist such as myself, who wants to focus on the playful, fun and joyous, it is grave reminder that Butler gives: “I don’t mean to say that gender is not sometimes play, pleasure, fun, and fantasy; it surely is. I only mean to say that we continue to live in a world in which one can risk serious disenfranchisement and physical violence for the pleasure one seeks, the fantasy one embodies, the gender one performs.” (Butler 2004: 214)

### 3.4 Theoretical positionings part 2: popular culture and world politics (PCWP)

It seems almost unnecessary to say this. Almost. But then again, being aware of many discussions that still discredit or demonstrate disbelief that pop culture would somehow be significant to IR, it must be said.

Pop culture is not frivolous; it is not something that is external to world politics and to IR.

On the contrary, pop culture in all its forms is worthy of serious scholarly attention in IR. Think of encounters with first year students when they first come to IR courses, how do they view the world and international relations? Do they come with a worldview that more easily resembles or fits in line with some specific theoretical

tradition of IR, like realism, for instance?<sup>12</sup> Where does this worldview happen to come from? Isn't it possible that it is strongly shaped by pop culture? Therefore, isn't it so that pop culture has a hugely important role in our everyday understandings of world politics?

Recent interventions using popular culture sources in the study of world politics have posited that relations of power extend way beyond IR's conventionally preferred focus (e.g. Weldes 2003; Grayson et al. 2009). Juxtaposing pop culture interventions into IR with interventions of IR feminisms brings up a few similarities.

Feminisms in IR have for close to three decades highlighted how 'relations international' consists of much more than mainstream approaches are capable of seeing. Just as the early feminist interventions in IR contributed to the improvement of 'visual acuity' in the field, the work on popular culture can have the same effect (cf. Sylvester 2002). Improving the visual acuity of IR does not mean simply adding pop culture artifacts as illustrations, but engaging with popular culture more seriously. The call for taking popular culture seriously is analogous to the demands to take gender seriously. Neither gender nor popular culture are something that can be simply added on to IR, but taking both seriously necessarily have transformative implications on both what IR is and does and on our understanding of world politics.

While taking gender seriously and arguing that others should do so too, IR feminists have drawn attention to the everyday practices and everyday people and directed focus to the so-called low politics in contrast with IR's previous almost exclusive attention to issues of high politics. Feminist scholars have also intervened in the field of high politics, and have challenged the core concepts of IR and demonstrated how the high/low politics division itself is underpinned by gender (cf. Scott 1986). Because of these and other critical interventions, IR has broadened and opened up to issues of low politics in the last few decades. Furthermore, it seems that lately artifacts from the low end of the political spectrum have become acceptable as valuable sources in the study of world politics (cf. Kangas 2009). That is to say that interventions by feminists and other critical scholars paved the way for pop culture

---

<sup>12</sup> The idea that all first year students come to IR as realists was raised at a panel on pop culture and pedagogy at PCWP VI conference (participants Kyle Grayson, Matt Davies, Simon Philpott, David Murtimer), Sept. 14, 2013 in Stockholm and it resonated strongly with those in the audience. There might, however, be national and cultural differences in this as it is my observation that about half of our new students are more idealists (small country identity and the way in which e.g. the UN has been discussed in Finland might have something to do with this).

to make an appearance as a serious academic concern in IR. Also, today there is a lot of overlap of feminist IR and PCWP camps, in other words feminist scholars have engaged with pop culture artifacts and PCWP scholars do gender and feminist analysis.

Lately, even mainstream scholars have embraced popular culture artifacts. Using this as an indication, it is safe for me to say that popular culture is here to stay.

At least a specific type of pop culture artifacts, namely Zombies have made it into IR (and I feel like there is a pun that wants to be made about zombies and IR, IR zombies, but let's leave it, at least for now). Dan Drezner wrote a book on Zombies (2011), there were also hugely successful panels on Zombies at ISA conference a few years back. In 2013, Zombies appeared as a tag on the new ISA conference submission system while for example sexuality was not included among the choice of tags. For sure, Zombies are here to stay and they are now a thing to be taken seriously by IR. Although, if I had to predict, I'd say that within popular culture Zombies are soon a thing of the past. When a Zombie appears as a main character in a romantic comedy (*Warm Bodies* 2013), the genre really cannot go on much longer. Incidentally, IR that is worrying over its own end, once again (End of IR theory special issue in *EJIR* 2013), has embraced Zombies whole-heartedly (there's that pun again, it wants to be made...).

Other genres of popular culture that seem to be arousing the interests of IR scholars across camps are science fiction and fantasy, for example TV series such as *Star Trek*, *Battlestar Galactica* (BSG) and *Game of Thrones*. However, I think it remains to be seen whether popular culture will become a serious scholarly interest across the board, or will it be something that is light-heartedly engaged with in blogs and other non-academic writings for those more mainstream scholars or scholars that seem to take their careers very seriously. Even though pop culture is by no means trivial and frivolous, for some it still seems to be so and engaging with it on scholarly forums may appear as risky business.

There is something very significant going on in terms of what popular culture artifacts IR scholars pick up, most of them still reflect the similar high/low politics division that the whole discipline was built on. TV series and movies that are about international relations in quite an obvious way, about conflicts, battle, war, struggle for power etc., are chosen as objects of analysis. I'm not saying that there aren't exceptions, but this seems to be the trend. I do want to point out that we should be

mindful and pay attention to what kinds of popular culture IR scholars engage with, on which forums (academic, non-academic), who are the ones engaging with popular culture and how, and how disciplinary power comes into play in all of this.

On a more superficial level, popular culture is a somewhat prominent feature of IR. This is to say that in contrast with a deeper analytical engagement with popular culture on this superficial level popular culture appears in titles (and subtitles) of conference presentations and articles. Thus, pop culture things are used as decoration and catchy gimmicks to draw in the audience and the reader. For example, a scholar might title their paper *Team America: World Police* and the contents of the paper may have nothing to do with the movie (2004). It can be “a bit of fun”, but personally leaves me cold when there is no analytical engagement with what emerges from the juxtaposition of a particular piece of popular culture and topic being addressed. Similarly, artworks are used as mere illustrations, more often than not, and serve as a decorative feature in the work rather than as real engagements (cf. Sylvester 2009: 18). Art can, however, be used as bases for deeper methodological engagements as for example Zalewski (2013) has done with the surrealist figure of the exquisite corpse.

In other words, it seems to be totally acceptable to dress up IR works, presentations and writings, with images or titles and subtitles from for example movies, songs and comics, but really engaging with these artifacts is a rarer kind of IR. I don't want to deny anyone the superficial use of pop culture, if they find pleasure in it, but I would like to encourage deeper engagement after this initial step.

The scope and spectrum of IR has expanded in recent decades, but in the meanwhile, also the terrain of popular culture has done so. The expansion of the two fields can be said to be both vertical and horizontal. Vertical expansion of popular culture happens along the local/global axis and horizontal in terms of the volume of practices, genres within them and the speed with which they circulate (Grayson et al. 2009). Memes and other internet stuff are part of both vertical and horizontal expansion of pop culture. Vertically they bring forth individuals as pop culture producers, anyone, really, can make meme and other parody images and potentially these images can have global reach. Horizontally they have added new genres to pop culture, for example, specific, and probably the most popular, memes are visual form that include easily recognizable elements such as a specific font and style of text added on to an image. Memes and other internet stuff also spread incredibly fast and

can be our first (maybe sometimes even only) contact with an international event, and they often are indicative of larger discourses and logics that underpin our understandings of international issues, such as nuclear proliferation. Very recently, young critically minded IR scholars have started paying serious attention to memes (See Brennan forthcoming; Hamilton 2014).

IR's vertical expansion has happened along the high/low politics axis and now its scope includes a range of topics from the international structures to the everyday life of individuals. IR also aspires to be a global and not just an American discipline. Whether or not it succeeds in this endeavor is up for debate. As for horizontal expansion of IR, similarly to popular culture it happens in terms of the volume of various practices - theoretical and methodological - and genres or camps.

The circulation of academic knowledge is also increasing, although publishing processes remain slow. Growing number of scholars are involved in blogging or micro-blogging (e.g. Twitter) and exchanging ideas and distributing knowledge by these means. It remains to be seen whether these non-academic spheres of publishing remain something where the not-so-serious discussions are taken place, as hinted above in my discussion of where the pop culture discussion seems to be mainly happening, or if for example blogging becomes something that actually counts in terms of academic work.

When even mainstream scholars have caught on to the circulation of popular culture material and imaginary, to some extent academics have become part of the popular culture cycles, which spin at an increasing speed. A prime example is this: about month and a half after the publications of *Battlestar Galactica and International Relations* edited by Nicholas Kiersey and Iver B. Neumann (2013), one of the actors on the show tweeted about the book, saying, "This book looks terrific and I hope people are reading and studying it!"<sup>13</sup> This kind endorsement from an actor potentially exponentially expands the readership of an academic book and rises interest in the reading public way beyond academia.

In addition, blogging and microblogging in themselves expand the readership of academics' work if not academic work itself. In terms of the wider understanding for policy relevance, I have argued for before these forms of publishing should perhaps count as academic work. The arguments for wider understandings of what counts as

---

<sup>13</sup> <http://occupyirtheory.info/?p=283>

academic labor, what counts as research material, what counts as policy relevance could potentially benefit the whole IR community and making the discipline itself more accessible.

All of the above clings on to a distinction between IR discipline and popular culture and implies a division between the world political and popular culture. However, these categorizations are false. Popular culture is indivisible from world politics and from IR and IR is indivisible from popular culture. As Grayson et al. (2009) argue popular culture and world politics should be conceptualized as a continuum rather than separate fields or sites. This conceptualization emphasizes the complexity of the intertwined relations between the two fields, relations that are constitutive, productive, and material. In other words, world politics and popular culture are always implicated in the practices and understandings of each other. Academic publications, such as Drezner's *Zombie* book, are one node in the complex network where imaginaries flow. In the course of these movements the imaginaries pile layers upon layers and may become sedimented.

As popular culture and world politics cannot be separated from but always influence each other, it is not so much of interest where they intersect or break apart.

“Rather, conceptualising them as a continuum brings sensitivity to how political phenomena are, at times, diminutively positioned as properly residing within the sphere of popular culture and, at others, positioned as important products of world politics despite being intertextual, mutually constitutive and even materially entangled through cycles of production, distribution and consumption. Such a conceptualisation also prompts us to remember that these designations themselves and the ways in which they are generated embody an important type of politics that requires analysis.” (Grayson et al. 2009: 158)

My interest and focus in this research project is in the everyday visualizations of nuclear wannabes and especially in parodic ones. The images themselves are both practices of popular culture and practices of relations international and as such, cultural sites where politics takes place. These politics are always gendered, sexualized and racialized. The internet parody images are a specific form of popular culture that has not really been addressed by PCWP scholars before. Thus, my contribution to this scholarly community is the introduction of this new genre of material and the methodological development for how it can be used. The super-fast circulation and pretty random ebbs and flows of the material requires specific tools



in order to meaningfully engage with it and one way of doing so is junk feminist collaging.

### 3.5 Theoretical positionings part 3: Laughter as a political sentiment

Although my main focus is on humorous and parody materials, some of the material appears as less humorous and more serious, because the interplay between seriousness and humor is important in the way in which nuclear wannabes are made intelligible in the everyday. In addition, it is important to note from the start that there can be no universal definition what is funny, but it is important to pay attention to what we laugh at. Especially to what those of us in the west laugh at, because on a global level, we still are the powerful ones. Western, and more specifically American, pop culture stuff dominates the international today. Texts, images and references that originate in the west are recirculated and reproduced in the funny internet stuff, such as memes. Consequently, the international that is constituted via memes, is a particular international – a western international - and the viewers and producers become acculturated into it (cf. Brennan forthcoming).

The question of what we laugh at differs from the question why something is funny. While it is easy to point out the moments and objects that make us laugh, the question why is this funny is always one that escapes explanations. Attempting to define the spirit of laughter, would mean imprisoning it (Bergson 2002/1911: 10). Think of it this way: the more you try to explain why a joke, for example, is funny the less funny it usually becomes. You either “get it” and laugh or don’t get it, or don’t find it funny at all. In other words, “A joke explained is a joke misunderstood” (Critchley 2002: 2).

Treating laughter as a political sentiment directs attention to power hierarchies among and between political bodies in those moments that we laugh at something/someone.



Thus, examining internet parodies can say a lot about the international and temporal context in which they are made and circulated and about how various political bodies are positioned relative to each other. All the material that I use in my collages is located in the wide, undefined, and unbounded cultural context of the west, which is unfortunate but inescapable. It is inescapable because of where the I who's writing this is located. My personal history, geographical location, academic position and training, all place me more or less comfortably as part of the western hegemonic political body. When I talk about we here, this is the wider political body I refer to.

I look at the various materials through a western gaze, although not uncritically. The western gaze is a particular way of looking as it is always intimately tied to global positions of power. The western ways of looking at and laughing at others matter, precisely because the west is dominant globally.

Laughter is here understood as a political sentiment in the same sense as Aaltola defines compassion as a political sentiment (cf. Aaltola 2009). This emphasizes the social aspect and nature of laughter rather than locating laughter in the individual (and biology) as, for example, a relief theory of laughter does (see e.g. Billig 2005, 6; ch 5; Critchley 2002: 3). In other words, I see laughter akin to the comic spirit as defined by Henri Bergson (2002/1911): "It has a method in its madness. It dreams, I admit, but it conjures up, in its dreams, visions that are at once accepted and understood by the whole of a social group. Can it then fail to throw light for us on the way that human imagination works, and more particularly social, collective, and popular imagination?" The central issue we can get at with the notion of political sentiments is their relation to power. By paying attention to laughter as a political sentiment, we can see how the various political bodies (from individuals to wider social constellations such as nations and all the way up to the human polity as a whole) are located in relation to each other. Laughter reverberates through the various bodies similarly as worry and compassion do when power in the hierarchy shifts and shakes. Because of this, and because of the ordering function laughter and humor can have, IR scholars (feminist and non-) would be well positioned to explore issues pertaining to the humorous. However, because humor and laughter are usually understood to be the lighter and trivial side of social and political things, the field that takes itself (even too) seriously has not paid much attention to the fun.

Taking laughter and humor seriously and examining their complex relations with power can increase our understanding of structures of inequalities and how they are

produced, reproduced and maintained. Laughter and humor can “erupt out of the fissures of colonial facades, and are never far from the question of discrimination, domination and power imbalances” (Carty & Musharbash 2008: 214). Consequently, it is useful to pay attention to what and whom we laugh at, or to whom we laugh with. Paying attention to laughter can be a useful tool for examining our own privileges and complicities, as (junk) feminism requires.

Laughing with someone is a way of aligning with them, taking their side, although this too can be done in a subversive manner when laughing an empty and hollow laughter, or by disapproving unlaughter (cf. Billig 2005: 193-4; Dodds & Kirby 2013), when the situation seems to demand laughing with someone. Laughing with someone, especially when that someone’s status is higher than yours can support the existing power hierarchy while unlaughter can disturb the hierarchy.

Think of how laughter functions in academic everyday contexts. It can have a disciplining function and it can discourage deviance (cf. Billig 2005: 202, 206): laughing at someone’s work may warn others not to take those directions and furthermore it can create a dangerous sense of superiority in those laughing.

Publicly ridiculing someone (who may or may not be present) is a classic silencing tactic that one can come across in in the everyday and in the academic everyday.

Laughter has a positive ordering function because it can create sense of community and inclusion in a particular situation. However, it also always excludes, especially when the joke is at someone’s expense.

Laughter can be inviting, it can appeal to people to come and join in the fun, “laughter always implies a kind of secret freemasonry, or even complicity, with other laughers, real or imaginary” (Bergson 2002/1911: 12). Laughter can be also seen as dangerous, because it “is a boundary thrown up around those laughing, those sharing the joke. Its role in demarcating difference, or collectively identifying against an Other, is as bound up to processes of social exclusion as to inclusion. Indeed, the two are one. Laughing ‘with’ some people usually entails laughing ‘at’ others.” (Carty & Musharbash 2008: 214.) “Our laughter is always the laughter of a group” (Bergson 2002/1011: 12). On the other hand, laughter and humor can be seen to have positive effects precisely because they are inviting and inclusionary and can function as a cohesive force for a group formation. They can be important in terms of creating national identities and in “making of the citizen” (Dodds & Kirby 2013: 48).

On a global level, then, laughter functions in creating a wider group than just a nation and its citizens. In western spectacles of laughter at various others, something I call hegemonic laughter appears. It invites others to join in and attempts to create a common sociality, the human polity while it also demarcates the boundaries of the human polity and excludes some from its sphere. For example, memes and other humorous internet stuff in the case of the nuclear wannabes travel to wider circles than their immediate surroundings at the time of their creation. Thus, the laughter they incite reverberates through various political bodies and in the age of the internet, the speed of circulation is so incredible that a meme can spread throughout the globe instantaneously. In that particular moment, then, because memes recirculate mainly western pop culture references, they invite the viewer to join in the hegemonic laughter and attempt to create a sense of belonging in the western international that easily masks itself as the human polity. By consuming western pop culture, we have also learned to laugh at particular things and laugh in particular ways. Thus, even if a meme, or an internet parody is not western made, if it references western pop culture, the effects are the same.

For me, the idea that hegemonic laughter pushes some outside of the human polity and makes them less-than-human, draws from Butler's work that touches upon a totally different register of emotions, that is, mourning and grief and the grievability of some lives over others and how this defines what and who counts as human.

Or rather, this idea emerges from the juxtaposition of laughter as a political sentiment and my reading and recollection of some of Butler's writings. This is to say that while we often like to present theories and thoughts being developed quite linearly on the basis of previous theories and thoughts (or in critical opposition to them), it rarely happens that way. I like to think about the issue more in terms of juxtapositions. Juxtapositions are at the heart of collage thinking and they can be done more or less purposefully. The more purposeful kind juxtaposing, i.e. theoretical, thematic and visual collaging will be discussed in the next chapter in detail, but the idea under discussion here is more of a result of serendipity.

Of course, often even the accidental can seem purposeful after the fact and especially because such is the nature of academic writing that we tend to erase the unintentional and write our research like it all went exactly according to the master plan.

Let us get back to the idea itself and the juxtaposition it emerges from. In the segment that follows, I will provide short quotes from Butler's *Undoing Gender* and

expand on what how these speak to me in juxtaposition with the previous discussion on laughter as a political sentiment and the notion of various political bodies. Here we go:

“what the example of drag sought to do was to make us question the means by which reality is made and to consider the way in which being called real or being called unreal can be not only a means of social control but a form of dehumanizing violence.” (Butler 2004: 217)

“Indeed, I would put it this way: to be called unreal, and to have that call, as it were, institutionalized as a form of differential treatment, is to become the other against which the human is made. It is the inhuman, the beyond the human, the less than human, the border that secures the human in its ostensible reality.” (Butler 2004: 217-8)

“to be oppressed one must first become intelligible. To find that one is fundamentally unintelligible (indeed, that the laws of culture and language find one to be an impossibility) is to find that one has not yet achieved access to the human.” (Butler 2004: 218)

Here she operates on the level of individual, but bringing in the notion of political bodies helps me to see how this could work on a global level. Generally, we might like to think of humanity and human polity as all encompassing, but examining how laughter functions in the case of the nuclear wannabes, it becomes apparent that the ways in which they are made intelligible and unintelligible at times push them outside of the human polity, quite violently.

However, it is not only humor and parody and the laughter they incite that do this, but other more serious popular representations can also function in this ultimately othering way. The more serious representations can also become funny on the internet. By this, I mean, for example, serious news articles that people share on social media accompanied with ironic or funny comments. I have previously only mentioned viewers or producers of memes and internet parodies, but a crucial group of people is those of us that share this material, after all sharing is what makes the material circulate. It is, then, it the act of sharing this kind content, that the sense of belonging via hegemonic laughter emerges.

The notion that laughter and humor have an ordering function and that they exclude while creating a community arises from critical social theory of laughter and humor developed by Michael Billig (2005). He deconstructs and questions some of the common sense assumptions about laughter that also underlie various previous

theories of laughter. Especially the notion that underlies most thinking, both academic and common sense, about laughter is that it is inherently good. In this sense there is also a similarity of laughter and compassion as political sentiments, both are seen as good things.

The assumptions of the inherent goodness of laughter and humor also entail the notion that “our” sense of humor is good and those that don’t join in the laughter or question our humor simply don’t have a sense of humor. A good example of this is the old and widely spread trope of the humorless feminist. Which, I think, arises from the interplay of privilege and this sense of the inherent goodness of humor. When a feminist criticizes sexist humor, it at the same time challenges the privileges of those making the joke and because no one wants to think about the privilege they have, so it must be the case that she simply doesn’t have a sense of humor. This dynamic can be seen to play out in various contemporary internet discussions and as well as in everyday contexts and encounters.

It is important to remember that those of us more critically inclined often like to see specific forms of humor such as parody as subversive (and this fits the notion that “our” sense of humor is good). When there is a cultural or ideological value for rebellious humor, we can justify laughter by claiming subversion (Billig 2005: 203). In other words, when critical thinking is seen as a virtue also good kind of humor is the subversive kind, and as a result, the other functions laughter may have in these cases are not taken into consideration.

The common sense belief in the goodness of laughter also hides power from sight. In the case of hegemonic laughter, it places “us” unquestionably in a power position in the hierarchy and reifies the contemporary world order. It solidifies the hierarchy of the various political bodies again and again in popular imagination at a time when we’re constantly faced with uncertainties and the possibilities of this order shaking and crumbling.

## 4 Methodological collage - collaging as methodology

"She's looking for the idea-winds that gust through people's minds and then become scars on the landscape. But how the contagions move from outside to inside isn't clear. They move in language, pictures, feelings, and in something else I can't name, something between and among us." (Hustvedt 2007: 366)

The conventional way of conceptualizing nuclear proliferation in IR, or, in other words the academic common sense about nuclear weaponry and proliferation, remains abstract in its language, which effectively obscures the terminal horror of nuclear weapons as anti-war feminist scholars such as Carol Cohn and Sara Ruddick (e.g. 2004) have demonstrated. In order to look for alternative ways of thinking about nuclear proliferation, I turn to the realm of popular culture and internet parody imagery and attempt to open up ways to re-conceptualize and think differently than the prevailing common sense in the discipline.

First, let's pause for a moment and reflect on the academic common sense that prevails. Why is it that more than 25 years after Carol Cohn's first journey into the world of nuclear strategists and her groundbreaking articles (1987a, 1987b) we can still go to a conference panel and hear how the same old lingo is comfortably thrown around with apparently no reflection on the language being used? It might well be that I'm juvenile or that looking at all these parody images makes me want to see the irony in all those thrusts and penetrations being articulated with all that seriousness. There are still white men in suits and ties discussing missile sizes without reflecting on their positions and complicities nor the possible consequences of these weapons. That is how the strategic discourse functions as a pre-emptive discourse and limits that what can be said and thought. What a comfortable existence that must be! The certainty and rationality of it all keeps the world clean and clear. But the world as I know it and see it is just more messy.



Internet parody imagery works in this study as a means to approach some of the messiness, it also makes visually concrete what is behind and beneath the clean and abstract language of the above mentioned nuclear strategists and contemporary IR scholars. Uncovering the gendered and sexualized undertones of nuclear imagery points us to the ways in which world politics on a broader level is constituted. Internet parody images are everyday reiterations of gendered and sexualized world politics.

A collage emerges as a result of the examination of the material through the intersection lenses of gender and sexuality. In this way, collage functions as a metaphorical frame for this study as a whole and an existing tool for the analysis. It also works as a metaphor for IR feminisms as a transdisciplinary whole. The collage methodology I develop from the basis of Christine Sylvester's (2009, 2007a) work on art and international relations and their limits in the contemporary moment, guides the structure of this book as a whole, making it a collection or an assemblage of (seemingly separate) pieces clued together by the author. I, as an author of this work, see my role as a scholar, an artist and a curator simultaneously. Alternatively, I could see myself as an archivist (cf. Benjamin 2007) as it would cover same elements, but my formulation here emphasizes the artistic work I have engaged in.

These roles overlap and intertwine, and can never be totally separated from each other, however, analytically they can be distinguished:

*As a scholar*, I draw from, critically examine and further develop the theoretical and methodological scholarly discussions within which this study (un)comfortably locates in.

*As an artist*, I bring together the raw material, the junk, the scraps, and create collages from it. The collages are then fragments recombined into new things (cf. Marx et al. 2007: 4).

*As a curator*, I have brought together already existing images collected from the internet and put them on display in earlier versions of this work. I would have liked to include a bunch more internet images in the final version as well, but copyright issues and the quality of the images create a problem. It is very difficult and in most cases impossible to trace the origins of the images and to get permission to use them and the quality of the image is often too poor to be printed. What started out as a curatorial work, turned into work of an artist once I had gathered enough material and courage and started making the actual collages. As the collages are original work for which I hold the copyright and could procure high quality photographs of them, I have been able to get rid of the problems of using internet



images.<sup>14</sup> What remains of the curator role is the placement of these pieces within the book. The book itself, in a sense, simulates a gallery space or an exhibition room where the chosen pieces of art hang together on the walls and leaves the viewer to do interpretative work. The role of the curator is to guide the viewer through the space by placing the pieces in certain order, but it is up to the viewer herself how to approach any given piece and whether to follow the set order or not.

Merging research with more banal everyday representations of nuclear proliferation can function as a critique of the elitist academic knowledge production. Similarly as the early collagists intended to challenge the conventions of painting and the nature of high art, and most importantly what counts as Art (cf. Butler-Kisber 2008: 267), by producing portrayals of multiple realities in the form of collages, I want to challenge the long held notions of high politics as the reality worth researching. Furthermore, collage methodology functions as a way to counter and disrupt the representational demands of conventional academic writing, in other words it aims to challenge what we think counts as Research. The actual visual collages are not mere illustrations nor research material in the usual sense, but both of these and something more. The art pieces are pop culture products or artifacts at the same time as they function methodologically as vehicles for further thought, both for me as the researcher and for the reader/viewer. With the collages, which are full of everyday internet stuff familiar to those of us who spend much time online, I want to invite even non-academic reader/viewers into the discussion. Thus, one of my goals is to make the academic discussions more lively and accessible, and to, much like the 'fathers' of collage, question political and social agendas of their/our time (cf. Butler-Kisber & Poldma 2010: 3).

Perhaps the most important critical goal that my junk feminist collage methodology aims to achieve is to question the conventional wisdom about nuclear proliferation by drawing attention to the gendered and sexualized underpinnings of the global nuclear order.

Through visual means, i.e. the collages here, I aim to make accessible feminist critiques of nuclear proliferation by making visible, and funny, the way in which gender and sexuality underpins the thinking about nuclear proliferation. Abstract theorizing about issues of high politics and feminism thus becomes concrete in new

---

<sup>14</sup> It really is a huge paradox that using images in visual research is so difficult when obtaining permissions can be very costly and sometimes impossible for all kinds of images, not only internet images.

ways. Visual art forms are powerful in that they evoke sensory and emotional responses. These embodied responses, such as laughter, can incite meaning making in the viewer in very concrete ways. Collage emphasizes and gives room to relations arising from juxtapositions. Instead of single coherent notions, differences and shadowy and playful mutualities draw our attention to multiple directions at once. (cf. Butler-Kisber 2008: 268)

Collage as a methodology contains multiple layers that are usually intertwined, however its main levels that can be analytically separated from each other are:

*Theoretical collaging* that allows for a discussion to emerge between different schools of thought despite and through disciplinary barriers and thus the camp structure that seems to be a defining feature of the current IR discipline can be overcome in a fruitful manner.

*Collage as a writing style*, which emphasizes creativity and oscillation between various styles and modes of written expression.

*Thematic collaging*, which is a methodological experiment which brings together seemingly separate topics and maps their 'shadowy mutualities'.

*Visual collaging*, which is a method for examining unusual research material such as internet parody imagery, whereby the parody imagery are seen as collages and used as raw material for collage work.

## 4.1 Theoretical collaging

Juxtaposition is a key process of collaging. On the first level, the theoretical collage can bring together knowledge produced by different schools of thought and juxtaposes them. When knowledges are juxtaposed rather than reconciled or separated into distinct camps (cf. Sylvester 2007a: 571) the emphasis is on open-endedness and closures are actively resisted. Theoretical collage further attempts to avoid unnecessary competition between differing approaches, even when it highlights contrasts between them. The key point of doing collage work, theoretically and methodologically, lies in the possibility of keeping one's imagination alive: "Borders between the elements can seem intact and possibly even impermeable, yet the unexpected juxtapositions alter meanings and enable new relationships to be

imagined or invented.” (Sylvester 2009: 170). My junk feminist theoretical collage is an eclectic theoretical collage that has affinities in several IR camps and it, and I, refuse to sit still by any single campfire. By playfully and humorously “camping up” IR feminisms, I aim to disturb disciplinary boundaries and to have fun while at it.

Theoretical collaging can resist the way in which academic writing and argumentation is commonly structured.

The way that arguments are often built rests solely on criticism and pointing out how one’s approach differs from some other approach and what is lacking from the work being criticized and how that work fails. Sometimes the failures are only small, other times they happen on so many levels at once. This genre of academic writing is widely accepted, but ends up promoting the camp structure of the field and setting up stronger fences between the camps. Through theoretical collaging new relationships between camps, topics, theories and approaches can be opened. Especially if the focus remains on what works well and where others have succeeded rather than on their failures and mistakes (see also Penttinen 2013 for arguments why we should include positive issues in IR research and be more positive in IR).

At a first thought it might feel like the concept of collages and collaging is alien to the discipline of IR, but actually it is not necessarily so. IR scholars have rediscovered, reinterpreted, and referenced important work of “old masters” or classics in collage-like manner. That is to say, they have incorporated aspects of earlier works unexpectedly and “ask[ed] the reader to reinterpret the known, see it differently, and create a new sense and sensibility after” (Sylvester 2009: 178) having engaged with the work. Especially feminist scholars have engaged in this kind of reinterpreting, take for example J. Ann Tickner’s (1988) feminist reformulation of Morgenthau’s realist principles or Christine Sylvester’s (1994) reinterpretation of Hedley Bull’s work. A recent example of collage like re-reading of a classic is Mika Aaltola’s (2009) usage of Thucydides in the context of contemporary humanitarian world politics. What is common to these collage-like re-interpretative works is that they take the old as their starting point, but then venture off to new ways of seeing the world and IR. Thus “[s]omething emerges outside of the old framework and yet remains one with it, inside” (Sylvester 2009: 178). Simultaneously the old canons are upheld, respected, and transcended creatively in this kind of endeavor. This kind of work might not explicitly identify itself as collaging, but certainly, the creative incorporations of earlier works in this manner can be seen as a form of collaging.

This sort of theoretical collaging is ultimately about learning and thinking rather than mere accumulation of knowledge (cf. Bleiker 2006: 94; Shapiro 2012: xv). It is about mediating understanding in new and interesting ways for both the author and the audience (cf. Butler-Kisber 2008: 265). Re-interpretative works help us to search new perspectives and teach us to listen carefully, rather than only offer new facts (cf. Bleiker 2006: 94). To emphasize learning and thinking over accumulation of knowledge is to challenge conventional IR notions of how to do and present research, as many critical scholars (including feminists) have been doing for a long time.

In this sense theoretical (and other forms of) collaging comes close to the way in which Michael Shapiro describes thinking as a practice of critique:

“To *think* (rather than to seek to explain) in this sense is to invent and apply conceptual frames and create juxtapositions that disrupt and/or render historically contingent accepted knowledge practices. It is to compose the discourse, of investigation with critical juxtapositions that unbind what are ordinarily presumed to belong together and thereby challenge institutionalized ways of reproducing and understanding phenomena. [...] To *think* rather than reproduce accepted knowledge frames is to create the conditions of possibility for imagining alternative worlds (and thus to be able to recognize the political commitments sequestered in every political imaginary). It is not [...] to administer *the* world within which collective tasks can be made sense.” (Shapiro 2012: xv, emphasis in original)

Some of the most recent ‘turns’ in IR, if we want to use this term, especially the aesthetic turn, but also visual and popular culture ones, call for vigilant and ongoing questioning of taken-for-granted assumptions. The concept of turns is problematic, because IR is currently so full of turns that the term has lost meaning. While there has been some truly significant turns, in IR and beyond, like the linguistic turn, all these smaller turns just keep us spinning around in circles or stratify us into camps more tightly than ever. Maybe we should rather be talking about avenues of inquiry that open up when we engage with, say, the aesthetic, the visual, pop culture, emotions, color, and so on.

As Agathangelou and Ling (2009: 9) argue, aesthetics matter because they shape the world while describing it. It is important to remember here, that conventional academic writing is not non-aesthetic, but it has a particular type of aesthetic, even when its aesthetic is not openly discussed or acknowledged. Or, to put it in another

way, all academic writing is narrative, just the type of narratives we each write differ. And sometimes they differ a great deal. There are avenues of inquiry that emphasize and experiment with unusual forms of narrative. That is, unusual from conventional IR academic writing point of view.

The fact accumulating style of writing, the kind that uses previous research as building blocks and adding yet another layer on top, differs a lot from the collage approach that uses scraps from here and there and by assembling and juxtaposing them attempts to inspire, challenge and surprise, leaving the rough edges visible and interpretations open. Furthermore, junk feminist collaging demands playfulness, which unsettles the prevalent IR wisdom that “world politics is too serious to take risks when dealing with its key dilemmas” (Bleiker 2009: 1).

Embracing humor and popular culture can, indeed, lead to new insights and so provide pieces that help us to arrive at a fuller understanding of world politics. This is not to say that this is a way to a complete understanding of world politics, but that through popular culture and humorous representations we can gain knowledge that complements the knowledges gained by other IR means. We can, and should, always aim at a fuller understanding of world politics, keeping in mind that no single approach by itself can do this work. As Bleiker insists, world politics is indeed so serious that we should (collectively) engage with all possible sets of knowledge practices and not only with one or few of them (Bleiker 2009: 1).

Some knowledge practices, that is theories and methodologies, are more compelling than other approaches to each one of us personally. We should be reflexive of the emotionality involved in how we choose our topics, approaches and theories. The choices we make about our research, we make as embodied beings in a specific time and place. Collaging can bring these issues to surface and give us room for reflection. We should remain conscious of all the various knowledge practices and the insights they might be able to offer on understanding the world political, especially if we have normative agendas (don't all IR scholars, really?) and seriously hope for a better world someday.

Collaging aims at a comprehensive view, in a sense that it includes multiple directions, but does not pretend that this view is neat and tidy. Instead, collage methodology retains the messiness and roughness that life is about. Much like Agathangelou and Ling's worldism, collaging can lead us to “locate selves and others interacting with one another reverberatively, contrapuntally, rotationally,

oppositionally, and iteratively” (Agathangelou & Ling 2009: 9). Further, they claim that “[t]hese types of social relations reveal the ‘affinities and complementaries’ that bind even seemingly die-hard opposites like Self and Other, providing the potential for less violent change and reconstruction.” (Agathangelou & Ling 2009: 9)

Through collaging we can engage the pluralism of research methodologies and research practices within IR feminisms and beyond in a broader context of IR without reinforcing the camp structure. Collaging resists the tendency and desire to elevate one approach over others, which always means emphasizing how approaches are conflicting. I’m not arguing that we should not look at the ways in which various approaches are conflicting, but that we should always also see the ways in which they might also be complementary. That is to say, we should not get stuck on conflict and competition mode, as we often do, because of the preferred mode of academic writing and also because conflict and competition is usually what we see in the world when we look at it through IR scholarly lenses (cf. Penttinen 2013: ch 9). As Bleiker points out: “The elevation of realist power politics to a virtually unchallenged mantra of foreign policy behaviour is a case in point. The key political challenge, then, consist of searching for new perspectives (that is, listening capabilities), rather than new facts.” (Bleiker 2006: 94) Others have recently argued for ways in which listening can help us question the assumptions we so often take for granted and to get beyond the conflict mode that only breeds more conflict into the world, in the academic everyday and more generally (Wibben 2011, Penttinen 2013).

## 4.2 Collage as a mode of writing / writing as a methodology

Somewhere between theoretical and thematic collaging, lies collage as a mode of academic writing.<sup>15</sup> This kind of collage approach methodically experiments with varying styles and modes of expression and has been gaining some traction in the margins of IR lately, and by margins I here mean both disciplinary and locational margins.

---

<sup>15</sup> Other and earlier experimental academic writing projects in IR see e.g. *Alternatives* Vol. 25 no. 3 (2000).



To reside in the margins can enable creativity and inspire one to produce cutting-edge scholarship. To be in and of the center means that there are greater pressures to conform to the ways in which things are conventionally done and research written up while in the margins one can find freedom to do otherwise. This is a privileged marginality, as we are talking about academics who are marginal in relation to other academics. Marginality and marginalization are always relative and context dependent concepts. I do not want to engage in marginalizing these approaches or self-marginalizing my own, rather I'm embracing the positive productivity and creativity this positionality allows.

What complicates both the camp image and the center(mainstream)-margins image of IR is that disciplinary action is multimodal and manifests in different ways in different spaces and places. In other words, there is more to an individual research positionality within the discipline of IR than in which camp she resides, or which approach she has adopted. Someone may well be not-so-marginal in a global IR context while very marginal locally, in a departmental, university, or national context for example. The collage writing I'm addressing here has emerged in disciplinary and locational margins of both global and local IR (and political science) while the local and national IR context can also be seen as residing in the margins (geographically) in relation to the global IR scholarly community. That is to say that in local and national context (University of Tampere and Finland), feminist scholars such as myself can be few and marginal, and also our national or local context is marginal in relation to the wider global IR fields.

The great thing is that to be a relative nobody from relatively middle of nowhere can effectively free creativity to do things differently.

Collage as mode of writing has been used to describe the structure of the work as a whole whereby the collages consist of ethnographical methodologies and utilize experimental modes of academic writing (see Kynsilehto 2011; Puumala 2012). Kynsilehto (2011) built a multi-sited and multi-vocal ethnography from fieldwork and interviews along with women's magazines, policy documents and poetry. Puumala's (2012) construction is built from similar materials, but more explicitly plays with the form of the collage as the work consists of pieces and episodes and includes more poetry. Shortly, she describes the structure of her work: "As any collage, this work comprises smaller Pieces, which resonate with one another with varying degrees of discord. The various Episodes and Pieces form intersections and



meeting points between theory and empirical material, the international and the local, the body and the political” (Puumala 2012: 20). Furthermore, her collage aims to “think the meaning and content of the political body within international relations and, thus, to reimagine the possibilities of political life within International Relations, the discipline within which this study is situated” (Puumala 2012: 17)<sup>16</sup>

Writing style and the mode of writing can be seen as a methodology, as in Elina Penttinen’s recent book *Joy and International Relations - A New Methodology* (2013). In her case, the joyful text and joy as a methodology can incite a sense of joy and hope in the reader and can thus be empowering. Academic writing, then, becomes a form of activism, which aims at not bringing people down in a world where there always exists enough suffering and angst. Especially in a field such as ours where we mainly approach topics that are not only depressing but also scary. Even my own topic, of course, is grave, dangerous, and scary and demands serious attention. However, there are possibilities in engaging with humor and laughter (or joy) while approaching these deadly serious issues. Laughter, similarly to joy, can be an empowering emotion; it can also momentarily disrupt canonical ways of doing, writing and reading research. As Michael Shapiro (2013) points out particular genres can think in particular ways, i.e. in different genres things are situated in different ways. Writing positive emotional registers into academic texts can purposefully challenge the boundaries of the genre of academic writing and change it, which in turn can open us to see things that we would not otherwise see.

This piece of art on the next page is a collage I made for Elina Penttinen to celebrate the publication of her book. It captures not only the themes of the book, but also the way in which the experience of reading her book is, indeed, positive and joyful. Reading a text can, at best, feel like a hug!

---

<sup>16</sup> Yet another example is Alvin Cheng-Hin Lim (2013: 13) who sees his methodology “as the creation of a discursive collage, through which I displace and assemble fragments of historical, anthropological and literary texts, including the memories of my experiences and the testimonies of my informants in Cambodia, in counterpoint to a selection of theoretical concepts, with the goal of illuminating both sides of the assemblage from the fresh perspective of the juxtaposition.”



[IMAGE "Bringing Joy to IR and Beyond" 2013]

In Puumala's (2012) doctoral dissertation creative writing, especially poetization of research interviews, works as a move to disabling the competence(s) we normally have as IR scholars. As Shapiro (2013) explains the competence we have acquired in our training and professionalization into serious IR scholars is a trained incompetence to not see the things we do not expect to see (see also Schouten 2009). Thus we have to sometimes unlearn what we have learned or we have to "forget IR theory" (Bleiker 1997) to see things differently. In Puumala's words:

“Writing creatively means that I try to push myself beyond the categories of body/mind, self/other, fact/fiction and truth/make-belief as dichotomies [...] it helped me in challenging the way my training in IR had influenced my conceptions about the world and naturalised certain questions as worth studying and others as irrelevant or not interesting within the discipline” (Puumala 2012: 52).

For me the writing style is important in this regard, I try to keep it light and sometimes use language that comes close to spoken language. In addition, the movement back and forth between the more serious academic mode of expression and the more lighthearted one should function as a disruptive force and as an essential feature of my way of collaging this work as a whole. This writing style combined with the artworks and images aims at pushing boundaries and challenging our trained incapacities as IR scholars, while also making the topics and theoretizations accessible beyond academia.

### 4.3 Thematic collaging

Collages were introduced to the study of world politics by feminist IR scholar Christine Sylvester (2009, 2007a), whose approach to them is mainly theoretical and thematic. She has traced relations international in unexpected relations and criticized the discipline's camp structure as mentioned before. Thematic and theoretical collaging works well in both of these instances, because surprising juxtapositions potentially open up new avenues of inquiry and novel insights.

The borders between different theoretical or thematic elements may often seem intact and even impermeable. Thematic collaging can create unexpected juxtapositions, which can alter meanings and enable new relationships to be imagined or invented (cf. Sylvester 2009: 170). In this sense thematic collaging, too, comes close thinking as a practice of critique (cf. Shapiro 2012: xv). As mentioned, thinking differs from explanation-seeking activity in the sense that that it aims at inventing and applying conceptual frames and creating juxtapositions which disrupt accepted knowledge practices (Shapiro 2012: xv). To do a thematic collage is to juxtapose themes that are usually seen as alien to each other. There may not be more reason to keeping some things separate than just the usual practices of doing research that demand thematic focus on one thing at once. Think of nuclear proliferation and humanitarianism, these two are such broad world political themes or topics that focusing on solely one of them and attempting to cover it may feel overwhelming. To unexpectedly juxtapose such themes can, indeed, "unbind what are ordinarily

presumed to belong together and thereby challenge institutionalized ways of reproducing and understanding phenomena” (ibid.)

In this sense the collage this work as a whole forms is an attempt to think and thus to disrupt the institutionalized ways of reproducing and understanding nuclear proliferation, which effectively functions as a pre-emptive discourse (cf. Cohn 1987) that prevents the emergence of alternative worlds and ways of thinking. Juxtaposing nuclear proliferation and politics of laughter with humanitarianism and politics of compassion, and centering the notion of political sentiments, can create alternative views to the common sense understandings IR offers.

## 4.4 Visual collaging

In the contemporary moment, we are constantly surrounded by the visual or visual culture, and perhaps it is not an overstatement to say that we are constantly bombarded by the visual. We do, indeed, have more and more skills to critically engage with the visuals we encounter in the everyday, yet we don’t always necessarily notice what it is that we see (cf. Weber 2008: 42). Seeing and looking or seeing and paying attention are different modalities, similarly as hearing and really listening are, it is the paying attention part that makes images particularly important to scholarship and research. When we don’t merely see, but rather look and take note of what we see, we already enter a mode of analysis. Furthermore, the point of paying attention is also to persuade others, in the academia and beyond, to pay attention as well. (Weber 2008: 42) Entering a mode of analysis by paying attention, we can also take a note of what we don’t see.

Collaging is a specific mode of paying attention, through juxtapositions it can simultaneously emphasize similarities and differences, and the playful and shadowy mutualities between seemingly separate topics. Concrete pieces of collage also demand the reader/viewer to pay attention in order to see what is going on in the piece. They require active participation from the viewer.

Collage methodology, especially when focusing on the third level outlined in the beginning of this chapter, that is visual collaging, is a critical visual research methodology in a sense defined by Gillian Rose. It aims at filling three criteria: taking images seriously and looking at them carefully; thinking about the social conditions and effects of visual objects; reflexivity i.e. the researcher considering her own way of looking and the position from which she looks at the images (Rose 2007: 12). Furthermore, collage methodology demands active participation from the viewer/reader.

This collage work takes a specific set of images seriously, namely internet parody imagery, a lot of which are collage-like to begin with. The social conditions and effects of these specific images are addressed mainly in relation to the topical collage of nuclear proliferation and politics of laughter and the methodological experiment mapping out their playful mutualities. The theoretical collage opens up towards reflexivity and the notion of junk feminism provides a frame for taking parody images seriously. A collage “can mediate understanding in new and interesting ways for both the creator and the viewer because of its partial, embodied, multivocal, and nonlinear representational potential” (Butler-Kisber 2008: 265).

Lynn Butler-Kisber (2008: 265) defines collage as “the process of cutting and sticking found images and image fragments from popular print/magazines onto cardstock”. The images and image fragments might as well be those found on the internet, and the cluing and cutting can happen “physically” as well as electronically. In the latter sense the images parodying the Iranian failed missile test are collages. Photoshopping (used here as a general term for photo manipulation) various images to replace the missile heads, or adding images onto the ‘original’ image forms collages of sorts.

Visual collaging is a circular methodology. I started out with collecting parody images and audiovisual parodies found on the internet, the former include conventional editorial cartoons, screen captures, and collage-like photoshopped images while the latter are mainly videos on YouTube. During the initial writing stages the editorial cartoons, screen captures, and photo-shopped images were used as illustrations of the points made in the texts, but they also served as vehicles for further thinking (cf. Rose 2007: 237). Collage is a specific visual medium, among various visual forms of engagement and exploration. The further thinking enabled and prompted by the collection of images, then, has been reworked and visualized into the collages I have



made for the empirical chapters. And again, the collages themselves work as vehicles for even further thinking...

“thinking and making in parallel is most important, as one aids the other. That the thinking should be immediately related to the maker of the collage is vital. This necessity for individual thought is what makes art so finite. This form of thinking is as adventurous as any other form of explorations, and the terrain is larger.” (French 1969: 10)

## 4.5 Description of the process of collaging when making actual pieces of art

This section describes the process of collaging as I have employed it in my artistic work and the development of this specific visual methodology.

First step is to decide on the topic or the theme of the collage, which often has been predetermined, as I’ve been mainly making collages as gifts for my friends and colleagues who have successfully defended their doctoral dissertations. I have also made collages as part of a conference panel and for a conference. In these cases, the theme comes from the title of the dissertation or from the titles and abstracts of the panel presentations or from the conference theme.

For the empirical chapters here the process of collaging has been a bit different, because the research material itself is already visual and could be used as raw material the collages, but I have also used some key words that are based on my initial analysis of the material. Collaging as a methodology is an ongoing and circular process where the analysis feeds into the collage making and vice versa. The collages in the empirical chapters juxtapose and group images thematically. Juxtaposition and repetition are compositional techniques that I have used. The collages exaggerate certain aspects by repetition and thus make visible the analysis and conceptual frames of the text.

“There is the material and it has historical implications, but it is also about my own intervention in that material, my present day reading of the material — my selection and editing. The invention occurs through the selection of fragments. The edit

foregrounds my own (mis)readings of the historical material. This falsification creates friction and energy. Maybe this is not a reliable archive, as densities and expansions are created through the selection, cutting, and additions. Some readings get closed down and hopefully some readings become more visible, more open” (Ellen Gallagher quoted in Wilmes 2013: 203)

The next step after deciding the theme or the topic of any given collage I make is to use a Google image search with the keywords and choosing images from the search results. Choosing the images is highly intuitive process, I choose those images that seem to pop out or speak to me for one reason or another. Sometimes they feel appropriate for the topic or especially fitting or in case of the gift pieces, they seem to be specifically suitable for the person. Some pieces also have additional elements, besides key word search results, that arise from or refer to the person, their hobbies, or interests beyond academia and the work itself. There might be colors, shapes or forms that appeal to me in the images I end up choosing. There often are excess of images chosen and once I start composing the collage, I pick and choose from those, again intuitively. I make aesthetic judgements at that point, what seems to make a whole that works together.

Making art is not dissimilar to research processes; we just don’t usually conceptualize research processes in terms of intuitive and aesthetic processes. There is a demand to present research process as logical and because emotions and rationality are seen as binary opposites and mutually exclusive the emotionality and intuitive nature of any research process is left undiscussed (for a notable exception, see Sylvester 2011). In one way, then, this intervention of junk feminist collaging into IR wants to challenge the ways in which we commonly understand what a research process is and stop pretending it is something wholly logical and only rational.

The collages I make are mixed-media collages, which means that they combine acrylic painting with paper cutouts that are images (whole or parts of) printed out and found through a Google image search or gathered through a reverse snowballing method as described in the last part this chapter. The first collagists such as Picasso have been said to use scraps, and literal junk, clued on the pieces to disrupt the purity of painted surface. The spirit of junk feminist collaging as an approach is similar as it aims to disrupt the purity (which seems to be desired even if it doesn’t necessarily exist, or hasn’t ever existed) of IR. When it comes to the actual collages I make, painted surface (acrylics) is used as coloring and as a means to tie the scraps together.



Sometimes it is a sole color background on which the scraps are clued on; other times the colors and paint is added on after all the scraps are clued on the canvas.

The technique of painting I prefer is to use quite a thick coat of paint to create some texture onto the painted surface and to emphasize the colors. Choosing the colors is similarly intuitive process as choosing the images themselves, I choose the color that seems to make sense aesthetically, but the color palette available always limits the choice. I have come to prefer colors that are usually associated with femininity, pinks, purples and other pastel colors, yet in shades that are often bright and quite bold. This choice indicates an aspect of reclaiming that, which is usually seen as lower in status by its association with the feminine.

The final touch of each piece I have made is my sort of signature, which a friend of mine called a scarabee, as it looks like and abstracted or outlined rendering of one, or of some other bug. Creating this shape, I often use glitter glue and sometimes paint. There is a story and significance behind this signature shape, however.

This shape is something that in Finland, particularly, symbolizes the female genitalia. It has a few names that that translate directly as ‘church boat’<sup>17</sup> or ‘a spider upside down’. This figure is something that most likely young boys would rebelliously draw in their schoolbooks or as tags in various public places.

In a sense, the figure I use as a prominent feature in my work can be read as a feminist symbol also to denote the communal and co-operative nature of feminist thinking and scholarship. Or rather, I have assigned it this kind of meaning through reclaiming the figure for my own use as discussed below. For a Finn viewing my work can be uncomfortable just precise the figure is often so “in your face”, big, colorful, and loud. It easily comes accross as juvenile and obscene, which can add another layer of challenge for a local viewer, not only am I making art as part of research, but it’s obnoxious and childish art. My experience has been that the figure do not translate trans-culturally even though one would assume it is quite obvious.

---

<sup>17</sup> Church boats were communally owned and used as transportation to church from the villages (in 17th-19th century) as churches were often located on islands.



This image is a detail from one of the gift pieces titled "Doing foetal power for Riikka" (cf. Homanen 2013).

For long, probably for almost 20 years, I have had a project of reclaiming the figure, as I made paintings in different colors just with this figure. This project is similar to some feminists reclaiming the word bitch

or cunt (see e.g. Cambell 2013). I'm not alone in reclaiming this figure, as there are various artisans in Finland who have produced and sold artifacts (ties, purses, pins, bags, reflectors) that feature an iteration of it, some of the products have been marketed as explicitly feminist.

What brought me to collaging was partly the research process itself and trying to figure out a methodology appropriate for this internet era randomness of imagery and knowledge I had been experimenting with. Of course having read Christine Sylvester's work on collages had a huge and inspirational influence. But really it was Jan Hanska's public defense of his doctoral dissertation (2010) that started it all. The official outfits of the University of Tampere in all their Start Trek -like glory were just too good not to use in some way. Combined with the themes of Reagan's Mythical America and prophetic politics this event visually and mentally sparked my imagination and pushed me to make my first collage piece. I have included two images here to show where this collage art project started. One shows the official defense gowns that the defendant can choose to use, but they are not mandatory. The colors are designated according to the role one has in the defense. The other shows the first collage I made.



[Above: picture from Jiri Nieminen's public doctoral dissertation defense. Defendant standing on the left side, opponent Kirsti Lempiäinen reading her opening remarks on the right side, and "kustos" (who oversees the defense) Mikko Lahtinen in the middle. Image below: collage "Hanska's Mythical Reagan" 2010.]



After making this first collage, it started to become clear to me that the collage methodology can be developed to this direction that also includes making art and not only curating various images into the research. The background of the artist-me is that I have basic training in arts from an after school program I attended for about six years while in elementary and (junior) high school. I learned lot of various techniques from painting to video making. Although, I did not make collages at the time, looking back to some of the work I made back then, I can see traces of the style of the collages I'm making today.

Slowly, over the course of this research process, it became more and more clear that this combination of art and research is exactly what I needed to do. Collaging does several things methodologically:

It allows me to use the internet parody images in a way that does not only reproduce them as illustrations and objects of analysis, which in turn could for the reader/viewer merely reproduce the laughter that is the problematic under examination here.

It works as a mode of further thinking, which is both aesthetic and conceptual. I make aesthetic judgments when composing the collages and this in turn emphasizes or de-emphasizes certain elements that have arisen in my previous analysis. Especially repetition and the exaggeration created through it highlight some things or themes over others in particular pieces of art. On the other hand, it can point me towards new themes and make new connections.

Because it is visual form, it can work as a way of thinking beyond language. Or, at least I try to playfully experiment with pushing the boundaries of our language-based IR scholarship.

It produces pop culture artefacts while studying them. My hope is that the artwork can function as invitations or easy entry points to my work for those not so familiar with academic theorizing.

## 4.6 Collaging is for everyone

A brief history of collage is often written to start with early 1900s cubists, Picasso (who I, too, have mentioned before) and Braque who used 'ready made' and found objects as composite pieces of their work. These collagists celebrated common materials that were typically understood to be beneath fine art. In other words, they continued to make art while rejecting the previous traditions that seemed to have become irrelevant. The Dadaists continued collaging as a mode of art making that opposed the canons of social order. They celebrated humor, serendipity, freedom, and the unconscious. While Dadaists may have emphasized destruction, Surrealism that followed used the fluidity and freedom to celebrate being alive and the marvelousness of the everyday. Later art movement, which has lot of collages is Pop Art. (see e.g. Atkinson et. al. 2005: 9; French 1969: 79; Sylvester 2009: 176-178, Whiteley 2010: 37-39) This history is often presented in terms of the big names of collagists, who are mainly men. However, the history (or her story?) can be presented to stretch back much more, way beyond early 1900s:

“Collage has a long, vital history as folk art [...] In Europe, Asia, and the Americans, all kinds of everyday materials were transformed into mementos and decorations: pictures made of matchsticks, straw, butterfly wings, or feathers; portrait silhouettes cut carefully from paper and framed; fancy paper Valentines garnished with bits of lace and cutout papers; and pressed floral arrangements.” (Atkinson et. al. 2005: 9)

This other and longer history is important to note, in order to gently deconstruct, once again, our notions of what counts as art and what counts as art history and how we keep constructing the division between the high and the low, the worthy and the trivial. Furthermore, as I would like to point out that collaging can be for everyone, it is good to remember that the everyday forms of collaging continue today in scrapbooking, card making and other everyday forms of cutting things and cluing them on a surface.

Emphasizing the art-ness of collages can be alienating to some and can feel like one needs great skill and training to collage. This does not require one to feel like an Artist in order to pick it up. On the contrary, collaging can be used, for example, in IR classrooms to get students engage in doing something creative in order for them to see things differently. As Brian French (1969: 9) encouraged “The technical



process is within anybody's scope: the materials used are cheap and they are to be found in most households. If collage is defined as the selection, arrangement and adhesion of ready-made materials to a surface, its scope is almost limitless. There is therefore very little to stand between you and the fluent visual interpretation of your thoughts." We can take IR students, or ourselves, to a museum to look at pieces of art as heuristic tool to start thinking about what is missing in IR and what we are missing in our analysis (cf. Sylvester 2009: 181). Or, we can send students to gather material and ask them to construct collages, alone or in groups and see what possibilities open up for seeing the international and IR differently.

"Popular arts are of and for 'the people'" (Sylvester 2009:22).

If I had to place my own collages in a specific art tradition, they would come closest to Pop Art. They consist of repetition and exaggeration, ironic and humorous juxtapositions, and bright colors. "Pop is a buzzword. It is cheerful, ironic and critical, quick to respond to the slogans of the mass media, whose stories make history, whose aesthetics shape the paintings and our image of the era, and whose clichéd 'models' determine our behaviour" (Osterworld 1991: 6). My collages are playful and they respond to questions of knowledge production in the internet era by bringing forth raw images that anyone can produce and circulate. The notions of what the international is are no longer mediated to us by mass media alone, but all and any one of us can participate.

"Collage is the customizer's dream and reality. It traverses boundaries without setting up exclusive enclaves" (Sylvester 2009: 187). We can customize "artworks, consumer items (cars), academic fields, or institutions" (ibid.), this I take to mean that we can make anything our own by camping up and pimping it. By picking up collaging, I've made this research process my own, I've customized the dissertation format to fit what I need to say and what I need to politicize. I've camped up IR and IR feminisms by joyfully carnevalizing research and academic writing and disturbing the division between serious and silly. I've pimped this book by including collages that are not mere illustrations. The politics of collage, then, are anti-illustrational. In other words, collaging as a whole inverts or at least shifts considerably the 'normal' priority of text over image (cf. Armstrong 2013: 23).

## 4.7 Data collection on the internet

The desire to construct collages and to develop a methodology based on collages has arisen partly both from the nature of the research material. The internet and the possibilities it offers are vast and nearly unlimited. In this sense, the internet in itself is like a vast and never-ending Benjaminian archive that consist of infinite amount of scraps. It is impossible to find a coherent and compact set of images on both Iran and North Korea, and this can be seen as either a problem or a possibility to do something creative. It is in the latter that the internet as a modality of knowledge can be done justice to.

Because it relies on juxtapositions, collage allows for the material used and studied to include qualitatively different kinds of ‘stuff’<sup>18</sup>. I use the word stuff, rather than research material to emphasize its everydayness and that it is by no means systematic, rather the nature of the stuff is quite random, as many of our encounters on the internet tend to be. The stuff that I employ in this collage work consists of various visual, audiovisual, and textual material that can be found on the internet (and also in ‘old media’). As the actual art collages described in the previous section are mixed-media pieces of art, similarly this whole doctoral dissertation is a transdisciplinary mixed-media piece of research.

Presenting everyday stuff as part of art effectively collapses the separation between art and things, or art and stuff (Taylor 1992). Similarly, junk feminist collaging employs everyday stuff to interrupt notions of appropriate and worthy research material. Consequently, it challenges the divisions between “low and high data” (cf. Weldes 2006) and low and high politics, and IR’s reliance on the latter of these pairings. Junk in my junk feminist collage approach in this sense implies crap and scrap, random everyday stuff, which is brought under investigation creatively.

The use of everyday stuff as research material also aims, as did the early collagists, for greater accessibility. That is to say, both that the stuff used in this work is accessible to anyone with an internet connection and that what I produce from the

---

<sup>18</sup> see e.g. Shepherd (2013) who uses “stuff” to describe various materials used in classroom to examine and teach about international relations



stuff aims at being accessible to readers and viewers beyond academia.<sup>19</sup> In this sense, the research attempts to speak back to the popular everyday representations.

The sort of random collection of stuff or data that forms the ‘research material’ for this project has been accumulated through Google searches and through what I call a reverse snowballing method. The Google search part of the methodology was described above when I laid out the way in which I use key words when I proceed making the actual pieces of art. The reverse snowball method consists of two kinds of processes, firstly, of following the links from one website to another, i.e. common internet surfing, as lot of the sites are interlinked especially in the case of the Iranian photoshop incident. The other process is the way in which I’ve acquired material either from links my friends and contacts have shared on social media. The sharpening happens indirectly or directly with me. Indirectly in this case means that they have shared links and they show up on my newsfeeds and directly means that they have shared links to my timeline/wall or in a private message. Instead of the metaphorical snowball rolling away from me and gathering more informants/interviewees along the way, the snowballs roll towards me and add to the collection of stuff.

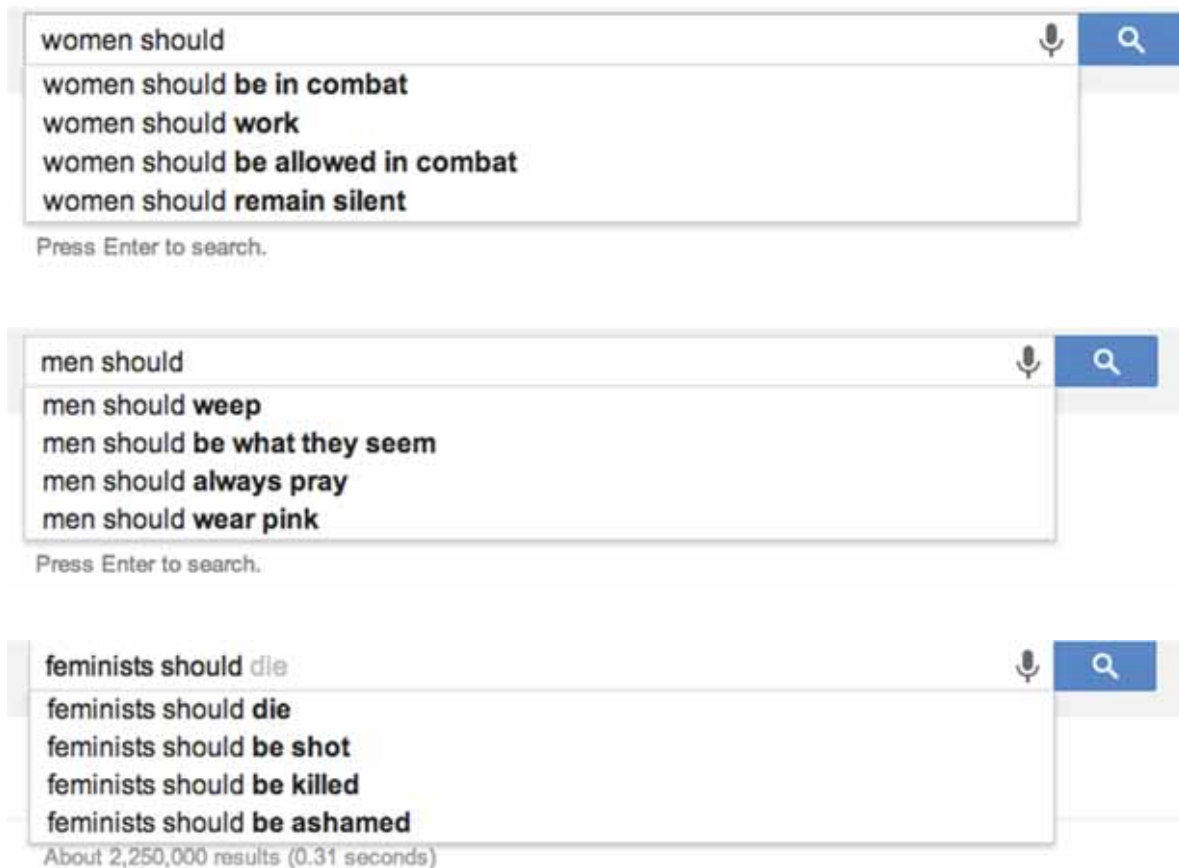
The randomness and fragmented nature of the collection of stuff I have acquired arises from the methods employed and from the nature of the internet. It is extremely difficult, if not impossible to trace the origins of some of the images. It is possible, however, locate most of the images broadly in the west, as most of them appear on English language websites. Thus, they can be used as material to examine our western everyday understandings of nuclear proliferation.

Google can reveal, in an immediate and striking way what “we” think of things. For example, what we think of women, men, and feminists, can be found out through Google’s autofill function when one searches “women should”, “men should”, and “feminists should” as the function suggests the most searched terms first. This has been utilized in an UN Women campaign and some other projects.<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup> Sometimes, however, images and stuff disappear from the internet without a trace, but most of the time whatever is put on there remains in some corner of the internet.

<sup>20</sup> see “autofill: a gender study” at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4SvePcldZgY> and UN Women campaign at <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2013/10/women-should-ads>



[IMAGES: Google search results, November 15, 2013]

In the UN Women campaign women should “stay at home”, “be slaves”, “be in the kitchen”, and “not speak in church”. The differing results are due to Google’s customization algorithm. I did the searches above on my computer while logged on to Gmail my (feminist) browsing history may influence the search results. Collecting the material for this research project I have used both my personal computer and work computer while being logged on to Google and while being logged off, and I have also used incognito function in the browser to possibly get at more material than the customization allows for.

Google’s customization and personalization of search results has intensified recently, this and the observation that recently few internet sites have an increasing effect on what some of us see, learn and know about world events, is problematic not only because the research material necessarily remains random, but more broadly. This intensification of personalization of internet content in our everyday creates personal bubbles where we ultimately will have no control over what remains unseen and outside of the search results for example. All the internet content we consume in the future might be tailored to us. As forms of older media, such as newspapers and

television, become integrated into the internet and only consumed online this kind of tailoring will be comprehensive. This kind of development adds to the fragmentation of knowledge in our everyday encounters with the world and international politics. We each might be getting at least a slightly different perspective, depending on the media we use and follow and the intensity of the use of media. The size and type of networks we are part of also affects the perspective(s) we might be encountering.

Collaging is a way of engaging with our increasingly fragmented ways of knowing about the world political in a creative and empathic ways, without forcing it into coherent wholes that would lose the initial fragmented nature of the worldly encounters in the everyday. "A collage reworks and remakes a reality. It is not a fantasy about remaking reality but the actuality of remaking 'it' visually, materially, and concretely" (Sylvester 2009: 21). This experimental way of doing research may bring forth connections that otherwise remain unseen and unheard of and thus result in better understandings of the world political. The micro-level of everyday engagements with the world political can reveal the familiar, that which is often so obvious it goes unnoticed. The familiarity and obviousness can surprise us and through the everydayness we can create a fuller picture than the focus only on the macro-level results in.

## 5 Wannabe 1 - North Korea

In the recent years, there have been many signs of the public fascination about the obscure North Korea. We seem to know hardly anything about the country, but also claim to know a lot of things. These claims are circulated and recirculated especially on the internet, but also by mainstream media, and their origins are often difficult if not impossible to trace. I'm not so much interested in verifying or disputing any of the things told about North Korea and its leaders. Rather I look at them as anecdotes, precisely because anecdotes can mark sites where the truth is difficult to get at (cf. O'Neill 2002). There are plenty of textual and visual anecdotes, and humor and laughter play a key role in their circulation.

Anecdotes are epistemological devices that essentially rely on repetition, the more they are repeated the more "true" they can seem. Thus, I argue that anecdotal knowledge is the main way in which we (as in general public in the west) know about North Korea in the everyday. Furthermore, the ways in which these anecdotes and their circulation rely on humor and/or laughter is significant to not only our everyday understandings of North Korea, but constitutive of its and our relative places in the contemporary world order.

Through collaging, I take this repetitive nature of the anecdotal knowledge production and aim to politicize it joyfully in visual form.

North Korea is often called the Hermit Kingdom, because it has been so disconnected from the rest of the world for more than half a century. Especially in the contemporary internet era, there is an expectation that everyone everywhere is connected to the global networks, but of course when digging deeper there are all kinds of digital gaps and lack of access. Nevertheless, on a superficial level of the popular imagination connectivity is the default status of being in the contemporary world, whether you are an individual or a state (cf. Reid 2009).

The reclusive nature of North Korea excites much curiosity and speculation, not least because of its status as a wannabe nuclear state. Lately, North Korea has been

opening up slowly to the rest of the world. Since 2007, the country has had its own internet domain .kp and reportedly, the elites have had access to the internet for a while. The country also has an intranet that somewhat wider population has access to and it contains a social networking site. The latest development is to allow foreign reporters to keep their smartphones on them while in the country and allow 3G access to the outside world. This has resulted in live tweeting and posting on Instagram, which in my view only adds to the anecdotal nature of the knowledge about the country. In this chapter, I will think through some issues that arise from the anecdotal representations of North Korea and tease out what laughter does in these contexts.

## 5.1 Figures of Kim Jong-il and anecdotality

The political body of North Korea has been embodied and personified in the figure of Kim Jong-il and later in the figure of his son and successor Kim Jong-un. These mysterious totalitarian leaders are largely fictional characters, the father was even more so than the son was. In the case of Kim Jong-il this fictionality was apparent in the sense that our view of him consisted of various popular culture representations, as illustrated by an article and images in the Guardian website asking whether Kim Jong-il is turning into a parody image of himself. In other words, he was seen as starting to look more and more like the puppet character in the movie *Team America* (Guardian 2009).

Of course, it can be argued that all political figures and our views of them are mediated and consist of second order representations, as also mentioned in the Guardian blog article George W. Bush was seen as turning into a cartoon version of himself. However, the difference is that in the case of Kim Jong-il parody imagery played a lot bigger role than in the case of other contemporary political leaders of whom we know a lot more “facts” about. Precisely because the anecdotal nature of all our knowledge of him and of the whole North Korea.

The rest of this chapter, then, focuses on the popular culture representations especially parody imagery depicting Kim Jong-il and the gallery of figures emerging

out of these representations. The various figures captivate political imagination in different ways and thus have different roles and positions in the contemporary world order. Furthermore, the way in which the imagery is gendered and sexualized plays an important role in delimiting the boundaries of the human polity and locating North Korea within or outside of it.

I have identified three main figures in the gallery of figures emerging from the parody images. These figures take Kim Jong-il as the embodiment of the North Korean body politic: *Kim Jong (Mentally) Ill*; *Nuke Kid - childish and misbehaving prankster*; *Lonely geek craving for love and attention*. Each of these figures serve here as useful point of departures illustrating the ways nuclear proliferation is gendered and sexualized in this specific case and more generally. They are not totally separate, but overlapping and mutually reinforcing. Kim Jong-un as the embodiment has started to appear particularly as the second figure, childish and misbehaving, and his young age contributes to this. Figures of both Kims are also addressed through how they appear as celebrity-like figures and as luxury consumers.

The underlying question here is what kind of masculinities these main figures perform in our public imagination and what we are laughing at when we laugh at the manifestations of these figures.

The different figures might also have different implications policy-wise, in other words, there is a difference of how to deal with someone who is perceived as crazy, or childlike or a lonely geek. However, here this gallery of figures functions as a gateway to contesting and critiquing the prevailing cultural logics framing not only our understandings of nuclear proliferation and global politics, but also of what and who is part of the human polity. It is important to remain critical of any and all representations and attentive to how they are gendered and sexualized.

However, the question is also much broader than a question of policy relevance, to borrow from Butler: “How do the norms that govern which lives will be regarded as human enter into the frames through which discourse and visual representation proceed, and how do these in turn delimit or orchestrate our ethical responsiveness to suffering?” It is not that “these norms determine our responses, such that the latter are reduced to behaviorist effects of a monstrously powerful visual culture [...] only that the way these norms enter into frames and into larger circuits of communicability are vigorously contestable precisely because the effective regulation of affect, outrage, and ethical response is at stake.” (Butler 2009: 77-78.)

A problem arises when representations of any given group, be it ethnic group, nationality, women, etc., are limited to or dominated by certain type of representations. These type of representations tend to overdetermine our perceptions of the given group as a whole, when specific representations dominate and counter-representations are very few or non-existent.

In the case of North Korea the figures of Kim Jong-il and Kim Jong-un in their various incarnations in popular imagery personify the whole nation arguably more directly than any other global leader, precisely because other representations of the country remain rare. The fictionality of their character is quite interesting and perhaps exceptional to some extent. Furthermore, Kim Jong-il's figure is still significant posthumously, because it lives on and continues to shape what and how we know North Korea in the everyday.

## 5.2 Kim Jong (Mentally) Ill - it's a thin line between a mastermind and crazy guy

For several years, until his death in December 2011, Kim Jong-il's health was an object of speculation internationally. His assumed ill physical health is one aspect of the Kim Jong (Mentally) Ill figure. In the fall of 2008 Kim Jong-il was reported to have suffered a stroke and rumors even of his death circulated. There was a great amount of uncertainty surrounding the issue of who will follow him to the throne and what will that mean for North Korea's policies, especially nuclear policy and following from that the global nuclear order.

The health speculations are an issue where the lack of visual material played a significant role, as there was no evidence of his health or ill health or at some point even of him being alive. When the first photographs of Kim Jong-Il were released after his recovery from the stroke, there were lot of speculations about those photos being photoshopped, fake or just simply outdated.<sup>21</sup> There seemed to be a great need

---

<sup>21</sup> e.g. TIME magazine photo essay: "Kim Jong-il: Doctored Photos?" [http://www.time.com/time/photogallery/0,29307,1857430\\_1794844,00.html](http://www.time.com/time/photogallery/0,29307,1857430_1794844,00.html)



and demand for photographic evidence, but as the picture manipulation techniques become easier and easier to use and more and more widely available the uncertainty about the truth-value of the photographs increases.

Susan Sontag has appropriately described the history of the photograph as “the struggle between two different imperatives: beautification, which comes from the fine arts, and truth-telling, which is measured not only by a notion of value-free truth, a legacy from the sciences, but by a moralized ideal of truth-telling” (Sontag 1978: 86). In the case of Kim Jong-il the evidentiary nature of the photographs, although their validity was questioned, was greatly important. We needed proof; we needed to know the truth of his condition in order to know what to make of North Korea and its existence in relation to us, its position in the global hierarchies.

The lack of visuals when Kim Jong-il was assumed to be sick could be explained away by the nature of the totalitarian regime. That is to say, in terms of access that international media doesn't have and the control that totalitarian regimes are known for (cf. Shim & Nabers 2013: 296). In other words, totalitarian regimes limit outside access and control the stories and images that are allowed both inside and outside. Furthermore, the lack of visuals in this specific instance can be thought of in terms of a visual taboo, which means that the divine “dear leader” cannot be shown as weak. Internally, to show him as weak and fragile could undermine his power and ability to lead and this also applies to outward projections of his leadership. When it comes to the masculinity game of global politics, it is important not to appear weak. The images of the weakened North Korean leader can emasculate him and by extension the whole nation, which could mean diminished relative power and minimize the threat this “rogue” state poses. While maintaining a credible threat seems to be a preferred tactic for North Korea to exist in the masculinity game, minimizing the threat potential would surely not be desired.

While appearing as physically ill can be seen as diminishing a threat or losing relative power, it can also simultaneously play into creating a bigger threat because physical illness can add to the “mentally ill” part of the figure. The insanity Kim Jong-il is generally taken as synonymous with the madness of the whole country, it is a madness that manifests itself as irrationality and unpredictability of actions (cf. Shim & Nabers 2013: 290).



[IMAGE: A detail of collage “Avantgarde IR” 2013]

Kim Jong-il as crazy appears as one of the favorite themes in parody images. Popular motif is the mushroom cloud coming out of his head and it appears in both mainstream media (e.g. editorial cartoons) and on the internet as photoshopped images.

The mushroom cloud images always immediately link Kim Jong-il and North Korea to nuclear proliferation, even if, due to the random circulation of imagery, they would appear in some other context.

As discussed above, when Kim Jong-il is seen the embodiment of the body politic of North Korea and as attention is mainly focused on him the rest of the population is erased from view in both serious and humorous depictions. The erasure of the rest of the population also happens because we do not see much images or hear

stories of the ordinary people of North Korea (although this is slowly starting to change, to what effect remains to be seen). Thus, the imagery of Kim Jong-il as a crazy guy works here as a device through which to think about pathologization and humiliation in global politics. The parodies depicting his craziness can be seen as mediated acts, which aim at humiliation and consequently at dishonoring (cf. Mendible 2005: 58). To laugh at the pathological characterization of Kim Jong-il can have implications on how the western audience perceives whole North Korea. Pathologizing the whole nation is a form of cultural governance, which functions at a global level and excludes the said nation and its invisible population from the human polity.

These images can also function as reminders of other pop culture characters. As we know from pop culture, it is a fine line between a mastermind and a lunatic. Think of the evil villains in Bond movies or more comedic depictions such as Austin Powers or think of the highly relevant pop culture artifact Dr. Strangelove as it directly deals with nuclear proliferation. The lunatic masterminds are driven by delusions of grandeur and aim at world domination. Kim Jong-il as a crazy guy plays into and repeats these familiar tropes. While doing so, these tropes, which rely on simplified dichotomy of good and evil, places “us and them” that is the west and North Korea in always antagonistic relation where we fall on the side of the good.

In other words, because laughter at someone always includes and excludes simultaneously, laughing at the madness of an other makes “us” appear as the sane ones. Consequently, in the context of the global nuclear order the western nuclear arsenals implicitly appear to be in safe hands and the inherently racialized nuclear discourse, which is organized by the NPT (cf. Hamilton 2014: 3) gets reproduced and strengthened by the laughter.

This figure of Kim Jong-il gets his motivation for acquiring nuclear weapons simply from his craziness while the other two figures have different motivations. The craziness might increase the threat a nuclear North Korea poses, because to be crazy is associated with unpredictability and often with violence. This may have implications on how others deal or do not deal with North Korea in global politics. Especially for the U.S. who have a policy of not engaging in negotiations with terrorists, for example, if the craziness did become prominent understanding this could hinder willingness to negotiate with North Korea. I’m not saying that there was an official policy understanding where this was the case, but that these kind of

popular imageries play some role, more or less consciously in all of us, even policy-makers.

### 5.3 Nuke Kid - childish and misbehaving prankster

Kim Jong-il as a childish and misbehaving prankster is another figure, which I have identified emerging from the parody imagery. This figure is partially overlapping with the lonely geek depiction, which is discussed in the next section, in the sense that both of them seem to be motivated by a need for attention.

This imagery opens up another dimension of gendered global politics as bullying and being a prankster is behavior stereotypically associated with masculinity, and a specific boyish masculinity. To turn things around, similar actions may be read as bullying and pranking, or not, depending on what kind of masculinity the actor otherwise is seen to perform.

The childishness of the figure might indeed diminish the threat North Korea is supposed to pose when its weapons arsenal is reduced to a mere slingshot as in an editorial cartoon depicting Kim jong-il as a little boy with a slingshot in his back pocket. His back turned to a group of four men, Obama in front of the group, a man with letters U.N. on his suit next to Obama and two other men peeking behind their shoulders. All men looking quite puzzled.<sup>22</sup> This toy is akin to things that can be patted or petted and thus hardly poses a serious threat (cf. Cohn 1987). However, the international community, once again lead by the U.S. are perplexed on what to do with this little kid who does not seem to care and no one knows where he is going. Thus, North Korea appears quite harmless. The men embodying the rest of the world can be seen as traditional paternal figures, the distant fathers, who when left alone with the kids do not quite know what to do with them since the primary role of the caretaker has been the mother's role all along.

---

<sup>22</sup> Image available at: <http://www.floppingaces.net/wp-content/uploads/image319.jpg>

In the manly world of international politics, the role of the mother does not really exist, because the division of roles follows the public/private division stretched into the international/domestic. Or rather, there are no maternal figures embodying active collective national political bodies within the imageries of international politics. When a maternal figure appears as an embodiment of a nation, it is usually in a context when she is in need of masculine protection (cf. Young 2003).

The public and the international are the realms historically reserved for men, while the private and domestic have been women's domains. Thus, these latter realms can much more easily be represented by female figures. For example figures such as motherlands and maidens, which are passive and in need of protection. These dichotomies and divisions are reproduced time and time again in popular imageries of global politics. Feminists in IR have theorized these themes for examples in discussions about the masculinism in global politics (Hooper 2001, 1998), the logic of masculine protection vis-à-vis the security state (Young 2003; Wadley 2009), masculinity games of global politics (Ling 2002) relying on and enforcing hegemonic masculinity and/or hypermasculinity (e.g. Nayak 2006; Maruska 2009; Agantheangelou & Ling 2009, 2004).

The prankster side of this figure can be seen as equally harmless as the childish figure, yet more annoying. In another editorial cartoon, the prankster North Korea purposefully attempts to bully the rest of the world and the U.S. and to get others involved in the process. Two figures, one an aging Uncle Sam like and another globe headed one have turned their backs on a grinning Kim Jong-il figure. This figure is lighting matches in the other two's shoes and has taped notes saying "kick me" on their backs. Perhaps it is Iran, the other nuclear wannabe, which North Korea is trying to encourage kicking the U.S. and the rest of the world political actors, as so often the links between the two wannabes in regards to sales of nuclear technology are brought up.<sup>23</sup>

In this context of the misbehaving prankster figure, it is important to keep in mind that the gendered cultural logic, which permeates western thought, consists of multiple forms of masculinity and femininity, some of them more dominant and visible than others are. Gender also always intersects with various other forms of power and identity (cf. Duncanson & Eschle 2008: 547). Because gender is relative and hierarchical, the gender performances that these images refer to and evoke can

---

<sup>23</sup> Image available at: <http://www.floppingaces.net/wp-content/uploads/image147.jpg>







Kim Jong-un is infantilized in the figure that I call *Nuke Kid* even more than his father was. Caitlin Hamilton (2014) has analyzed memes of Kim Jong-un and found three different types of infantilization in them: likening him to childish pop culture characters; lack of mature physical or psychological attributes; and inclusion of plastic toys in the images. When Kim Jong-un is represented as a childish character, it follows that he appears as naïve, inexperienced, and having little or no grip on reality. In other words, he lacks reason and experience that the nuclear haves (who can be trusted with nuclear arsenals) have. When he appears as a teenage boy lacking physical and psychological attributes required from a nuclear state leader, he's seen as lacking not only social skills but also as unable to control his temper and fluctuating emotions. The implication also is that he is obsessed with sex (his father's son, indeed) and lacks understanding that his actions have consequences. When he plays with plastic toys, infantilization happens similarly as by the two previous types, but also by way of equating nuclear weapons that he covets with toys. Thus, infantilization is doubly effective. (Hamilton 2014: 18-22.)

The collage *Nuke Kid* vs. PSY brings together two themes, the incarnation of the childish and misbehaving prankster figure in Kim Jong-un and his celebrityness (see more on this theme below). Here it appears in contrast and competition with PSY the globally hugely popular South Korean pop artists whose song *Gangnam Style* has been viewed over two billion times on Youtube.<sup>24</sup> The childishness of Kim Jong-un is emphasized over and over again in parodies, and in more serious representations too, because of his young age. His young age creates uncertainties in the western viewers because it brings doubt into his abilities to gain control of his country and especially the military leadership. The memes play into and reproduce this sense that he is childish and irresponsible and thus cannot be trusted with nuclear weaponry. Simultaneously they produce the nuclear haves as mature, responsible, and rational ones, thus also trustworthy.

The juxtaposition of Kim Jong-un and PSY further plays into the teenage boy image of the *Nuke Kid* whereby he can be seen as yet another youngster looking to become a global celebrity. He, too, wants billions of viewers and millions of fans for his antics.

---

<sup>24</sup> Video available at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9bZkp7q19f0> Published July 15, 2012. Number of views on June 17, 2014: 2,017,442,837.

## 5.4 Lonely geek craving for love and attention

“I'm so ronery, so ronery, so ronery and sadry arone”<sup>25</sup>

The ways in which global politics, or any other realm of life, is gendered cannot really be meaningfully thought about in separation of how it is also sexualized. (Hetero-) sexuality is especially significant in the figure of Kim Jong-il as the lonely geek craving for love and attention. Variations of the this theme can be found in analyses of why North Korea aspires to be a nuclear power, in cartoons, in memes, on Youtube, in the movie *Team America: World Police* among other popular representations.

The exclusion of the various racialized, sexualized, and gendered others from the human polity secures and stabilizes the hierarchical world order at a sentimental and emotional level (cf. Aaltola 2009: 2). It can be argued that this, along with other stabilizations of identities, are “grounded in a persistent heterosexual matrix” (Ferguson 2008: 179). To pry open the sentimentality involved in maintenance of the heterosexual matrix, it is useful to return to the classic feminist IR questions of where are the women and what are they doing with a twist of my junk feminist questions about what we are laughing at.

In the case of North Korea and depictions of Kim Jong-il as the embodiment of the whole nation there is both a lack and an excess of women. It was often mentioned, especially in regards to the speculations who would follow him to the throne, that he had possibly had several wives, but was currently estranged from them all.

“There's no one  
Just me onry  
Sitting on my rittle throne  
I work rearry hard and make up great prans  
But nobody ristens, no one understands  
Seems like no one takes me serirousry”

---

<sup>25</sup> Lyrics from a song in the movie *Team America*. Available at e.g.: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A3GTBVPI2Dk>

The figure of Kim Jong-un, which appears in more serious stories, is different now that he has appeared beside his wife on several occasions, he is fulfilling the purpose and the expected role assigned to ‘normal’ men. That is the role of a husband and a father. On the other hand, when he’s depicted in parody images as doodling penises on paper while sitting in a meeting (see Nuke Kid vs. PSY collage; Hamilton 2014: 19) like a teenage schoolboy, it appears that he, too, might be obsessed with sex.

When it comes to Kim Jong-il, we heard rumors of his “joy division” which was supposed to consist of several hundred of the most attractive women in the country whose job was to entertain the “dear leader”. Again, these rumors like many other anecdotes continued to circulate after his death, too.

Now, Kim Jong-un has been said to continue the tradition of “pleasure squads”, but has a hard time keeping the tradition alive, because these troops should consist of virgins, who apparently are hard to find in the rough times of famine and starvation (Ingersoll 2013). Yes, the origins of these stories are usually South Korean propaganda, but because we (as in the general public in the west) seem to have a strange fascination with anything North Korean, they often circulate unquestionably and start to have a life of their own. As stated in the beginning of this chapter, I don’t much care whether these stories hold any truth in them, but rather what they and their circulation says about our relations to North Korea.

These highly sexualized and objectified women, rumored to be in the pleasure squads, do not factor into explanatory schemas to the same extent as the lack of women did in Kim Jong-il’s life. Rather, these women in the joy division are mere curiosities along with his supposed collections of thousands of movies in his dvd-library and hundreds of cars. These women are commodified and equated with the western consumer goods that he was supposed to be in possession of, yet another luxury item and a status symbol.

“And so I'm ronery  
A rittle ronery  
Poor rittle me”

The frame in common for both the lack and excess of women is the above mentioned heterosexual matrix. There is a lot of boundary policing going on in these kind of imageries and imaginations and it constitutes the intelligibility of the North Korean body politic and its embodiment in the figure of the Kims. In order for any state to become intelligible as a subject of world politics, boundaries have to be meaningfully drawn (Wadley 2009: 47) and not only drawn but guarded and policed as well. And here I'm not talking about boundaries as in physical borders of a state, but as the more symbolic boundaries of statehood and its (always) gendered performances in the international realm.

"[B]oundaries must be drawn in meaningful ways for the state to become intelligible as a subject" and Butlers 'recipe' for intelligible subjects "includes gender (among other related constructions like race) as it is regulated by a compulsory, naturalized, and normative heterosexuality." This is to say that the heterosexual matrix is a cultural grid which "structures the meanings that gender performances must assume to make sense." (Wadley 2009: 47.) Consequently, an intelligible subject must and can only be constituted in relation to normative heterosexuality, as in the case of Kim Jong-il as the embodiment of North Korean body politic the lack and/or excess of heterosexual feminine subjects in his life performatively constitutes him and by extension the state he embodies as a heterosexual masculine subject.

As Jonathan Wadley (2009: 47-8) further argues that Butler's notion of performativity can be useful for IR understanding of constitution of states: "If states are intelligible as people, then her theory, which explains how people become intelligible, can be used to better understand states. It can shed light not only on the processes through which states are naturalized, but also on the unacknowledged relationship that exist among the states by virtue of the norms through which they become intelligible. Gender must be counted among these norms. To apply Butler's theory of performativity, without attempting to abstract gender from it, is to argue that states are gendered, and that their gendering is no more metaphorical than is the gendering of humans."

Parodies under examination in this research project can be thought of in terms of cultural fantasies. In other words, they make visible some cultural fantasies about gendered and sexualized relations, especially between states. "What operates at the level of cultural fantasy is not finally dissociable from the ways in which material life is organized" (Butler 2004: 214). That is to say that while my analysis remains on

symbolic level that can appear distant from, say, actual foreign policy relations between states, the ways in which we understand and know about various states in the everyday have implications on how the relations among states play out in “real life”. In other words, “particular political strategies depend upon a pre-established view of perceptible reality in which visual images play a central role” (Shim & Nabers 2013: 290). These cultural fantasies and the popular imaginaries that manifest and reveal them can function as creating conditions of possibility, that is, to have implications to how decision makers understand their position in relation to the nuclear wannabes and thus what political decisions are made and how the wannabes’ actions are read and interpreted. Thus, cultural fantasies and cultural logics have material effects through the decisions political leaders make, but also through each of us and our everyday actions.

“There's nobody  
I can relate to  
Feel like a bird in a cage  
It's kinda silly  
But not really  
Because it's filling my body with rage”

When Kim Jong-il was depicted as lacking women in his life he was represented as lonely and desperate, lacking romance and a acceptance through heterosexual relationship, which drove him to ‘act out’. This is a common trope exemplified by the song the puppet character sings in *Team America: World Police*.<sup>26</sup> It is also replayed in videos that come up when one searches Kim Jong-il on Youtube. There are at least several “date ad” videos featuring “Kim Jong-il” looking for company.<sup>27</sup>

These parodies invite us to laugh at a failed heterosexual (and hegemonic) masculinity. As a head of state, Kim Jong-il surely could be among the most powerful men in the world, yet he fails in effectively performing hegemonic (heterosexual)

---

<sup>26</sup> video available at: [http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xhve8\\_team-america-im-so-ronery\\_fun](http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xhve8_team-america-im-so-ronery_fun)

<sup>27</sup> “Kim Jong-il Dating Video” which uses a series of images and texts [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V\\_YDXvAaWpQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V_YDXvAaWpQ); “Kim Jong Il Eharmony” <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qHkWv1vHtHk>; “Kim Jong Il online dating testimonial” [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dk\\_DHh5iLrk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dk_DHh5iLrk) In these two a comedian Danny Cho ‘impersonates’ Kim Jong-il.

masculinity and thus appears as pathetic lonely geek. Again, he is not masculine enough to be taken seriously as a head of a nuclear state.

“I'm the smartest most crever most physicarrry fit  
But nobody else seems to rearize it  
When I change the world maybe they'll notice me  
But until then I'rr just be ronery  
Rittle ronery, poor rittle me”

From a critical feminist point of view, the date ad parody videos that end in “Kim Jong-il” shooting the women he wants to date because they do not conform to his expectation, can be seen as highly problematic. They not only reproduce heteronormativity, i.e. heterosexual monogamous relationships as the only desirable way of being in the world, they also play out a script where an acceptable masculine response to rejection is to resort to violence. And that is something that is very real in many people’s lives. I am aware that perhaps I am a humorless feminist taking these things too seriously, after all they are “only jokes”. It is sometimes a difficult line to walk this taking humor seriously and addressing the serious humorously.

Jokes can reveal some things about the cultural grids, which make things intelligible, true, legitimate and acceptable.

As the embodiment of the political body of North Korea as a whole, this lonely geek figure of Kim Jong-il in its various manifestations reveals the anxious relationship we in the west have to this country and its leaders and how the country is made intelligible in the everyday.

“I'm so ronery”



## 5.5 Kims as celebrity-like characters

There are several quite popular memes that use series of images of Kim Jong-il and Kim Jong-un. The most recent one is an internet meme called Kim Jong-un really, really wants cake,<sup>28</sup> which is a variation of the Kim Jong-un looking at things meme that followed the Kim Jong-il looking at things meme when Kim Jong-un succeeded his father as the leader of North Korea.<sup>29</sup> There is another variation, as well, which is the Kim Jong-un is hungry or Kim Jong-un looks hungry.<sup>30</sup> All of these memes utilize images that are originally common propaganda images where Kim Jong-il or Kim Jong-un are depicted in visiting various sites and looking at various items.

Some memes take off better than others and no one is able to quite pin point why. This is similar to the question why something is funny; it is hard if not impossible to know. As the creator of the Kim Jong-il looking at things meme states on the about page: “it does exactly what it says on the tin. pictures of kim jong-il. looking at things. why is it so funny? i have no idea either. [sic]”<sup>31</sup>

I argue that these memes, along with other representations that parody the North Korean leaders can be seen not only in terms of how they gender and/or sexualize, but also how they constitute the Kims as celebrity-like characters of world politics. The celebrity-ness arises from the lack of certain knowledge and circulation of anecdotes and there are associative logics that equate especially Kim Jong-un with celebrities.

The centrality of anecdotes in the everyday understandings and experiences of the world political is apparent in the narratives about Kim Jong-il. Specifically after his

---

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.dailydawdle.com/2012/02/kim-jong-un-really-really-wants-cake-7.html>

<sup>29</sup> <http://kimjongunlookingatthings.tumblr.com/> and <http://kimjongillookingatthings.tumblr.com/> The latter ran until exactly a year after the death of Kim Jong-il, and the associated Facebook page still has over 60,000 followers <https://www.facebook.com/kimjongillookingatthings> while the Kim Jong-un looking at things Facebook page has a bit over 5,000 followers <https://www.facebook.com/realkimjongunlookingatthings> Another Kim Jong-un looking at things can be found at <http://kimjongunlookingatthings.com/> and the associated Facebook page has almost 6,500 followers. (Checked in May 2013)

<sup>30</sup> <http://kimjongunishungry.tumblr.com/> and <http://www.quickmeme.com/Hungry-Kim-Jong-Un/> and [http://www.funnyjunk.com/funny\\_pictures/3322583/Hungry+Kim+Jong-un+comp/](http://www.funnyjunk.com/funny_pictures/3322583/Hungry+Kim+Jong-un+comp/)

<sup>31</sup> <http://kimjongillookingatthings.tumblr.com/about>

death the anecdotes that previously popped up here and there, were repeated and circulated again and again. There is lot of criticism of the personality cults of totalitarian leaders; this criticism focuses on the way the leaders are seen in their countries where the figures of the leaders often grow into mythical proportions. Yet, this begs a question, how different is the western perception of these figures, really? There seems to be an assumption that rational “we” have a more real and truthful understanding of e.g. who Kim Jong-il is. Yet we can’t always distinguish between a man and a cartoon character. This mysterious totalitarian leader is largely a fictional character, in the sense that our view of him consists of various popular culture representations, as illustrated in the beginning of this chapter. Of course, it can be argued that all political figures and our views of them are mediated and consist of second order representations, but in the case of Kim Jong-il the parody imagery play a lot bigger role than in the case of other contemporary political leaders of whom we know a lot more “facts” about.



[IMAGE: “Gluttonous Kim” 2013]

The cake meme can be seen as one of those moments where Kim Jong-un is like any other celebrity, he is seen as a bit plump, maybe even fat by some standards (especially in contrast with his people that we don't often see but assume to be starving). Thinking about this meme in the context of celebrities it becomes evident what a strong body-policing element it contains. By body-policing, I mean the discourse of judging others' bodies, and clothing choices, publicly. Most often it's the bodies of women that are policed in western culture, but increasingly to men too. Placing Kim Jong-un as an object of body-policing, and inviting us to laugh at his body shape, these memes effectively feminize him.

Furthermore, this meme hints at an uncontrollable hunger and binge eating and thus implies all those usual stereotypes of fat people as lazy, gluttonous etc. Also because eating disorders are also usually seen as women's issues, men (manly men especially) don't supposedly have them. Fatness is often seen as character flaw in many ways, because it indicates a lack of self-discipline and lack of control. Self-discipline is seen as a virtue in contemporary western culture. These "hungry Kim Jong-un memes" also infantilize him because he is interested in only sweet things such as candy and cakes. Furthermore, they suggest "that he has neither the self-control nor the intelligence to attend to feeding himself and must seek advice externally as a result of lacking the ability to differentiate between what is edible and what is not." (Hamilton 2014: 23-24.)

Furthermore, in the western view, there seems to be something especially funny about being fat AND Asian, as there is another meme of the "fat asian kid" which can be found through the tags associated with the cake meme. It is one of those memes where someone's face is inserted into various movie posters or artworks for humorous effect; also, various costumes are photoshopped onto the kid. Following from the above, then, in this cake meme laughter and ridicule work to feminize Kim Jong-un, because it places him as an object of body policing similarly to women in general and especially women celebrities. The implied eating disorder further feminizes him. In addition, Asian men in general are often othered through emasculation, as a result Kim Jong-un's masculinity is here diminished doubly or triply. This diminishing of his masculinity together with the infantilization once again contribute to the notion that he is not fit to become part of the club of nuclear haves.

## 5.6 Luxurious Kims

The circulation and repetition of anecdotes over time create the basis for what we think we know about the late leader of North Korea. A good example are the listings of “facts you didn’t know about Kim Jong-il” published after his death (e.g. Guardian 2009). According to the title of an article on the Guardian website there were ten things that we never knew about Kim Jong-il, yet most of us knew all those things, for example that he loved cognac, has a huge DVD collection and was fascinated with many things western. Even some mainstream media reporting acknowledges the uncertainty and rumor-ness of our knowledge of these things, while it had very real policy effects i.e. a ban on luxury imports: “The State Department's newly released list of no-go goodies blends knowledge and legend of the diminutive strongman's high-end tastes. Denying Kim what he craves, the theory goes, might prompt better behavior from a dictator who reportedly spends nearly a million dollars a year on rare cognac.” (WP Nov. 30, 2006)

“Fake fur and real fur and jewelry and Jet Skis,  
Crystal and Segways and bubbly and Caddies,  
Race cars and leather and plasma TVs --  
These are a few of Kim’s favorite things.”  
[poetic reporting by Washington Post, Nov 30, 2006]

No Fender Stratocasters, Harleys, Ski-Doos, Marlboros. No caviar, camcorders, wristwatches, cars. No yachts, water scooters, race cars, motorcycles, station wagons, Segways. No DVD players and TVs (larger than 29 inches). No American china, crystal, liquor. No designer duds, Chanel No. 5, rare stamps. No silk scarves, designer fountain pens, furs, leather luggage. iPod shortage. No Samuel Adams beer. (WP Nov. 30, 2009) Indeed, it reads like a reverse letter to the Santa and again Kim Jong-il appears as a childish figure whereby the rest of the world with the lead of the U.S. and help of the UN function as parental figures threatening to take away all the toys if he does not play nice. “The United States reserves the right to take even more privileges away, should Kim's bad behavior continue -- or should his tastes change” (WP Nov. 30, 2006)





[IMAGE: Detail from collage “Green North Korea” 2014]

Rumors about the luxurious lifestyle of Kim Jong-il have been followed by similar speculations about Kim Jong-un, whose fascination with Disney characters, especially Mickey Mouse, and other western popular culture products has been reported repeatedly. There are continuities in these discourses regarding the father and the son and their luxury consumption, but there are also differences. It is intriguing how these anecdotes and the repetition of them exist in contrast to all the invisible suffering of ordinary North Koreans. I choose to call the suffering invisible, because visual imagery depicting it is very rare in comparison to other humanitarian crises. We do hear about the famine and other problems in the media, but hardly ever see it.

The portrayals of Kim Jong-il and Kim Jong-un contribute to the sense of unease about the suffering and makes it seem like it is deliberately inflicted. That is probably what impresses and fascinates about these characters. In the image above, the hands reaching out can be seen either as celebratory, adoringly reaching out like a group of fans. Alternatively, they can be the haunting figures that function as a reminder of the suffering of the people. This kind of image, similarly as the hunger memes can also mock the North Korean people, if the hands are seen as fans. The hunger memes can be seen as mocking the people, “because they must defer to the authority of a leader who is child-like, naïve, and ignorant” (Hamilton 2014: 26). Here the

people are mocked because they accede to a leader who does not care about them but only cares about acquiring ridiculous amounts of luxury goods.

Supposedly, Kim Jong-il and Kim Jong-un bear similar markers than any celebrity: with an additional i at the end of the name in the above poetic depiction and it could well be about Kimi Räikkönen's (Finnish F1 driver) favorite things or it could well be about Kim Kardashian.<sup>32</sup>

Juxtaposing these contemporary celebrity Kims with the dictator Kims and their luxury consumptions reveals a difference. This difference between Kim Jong-il or Kim Jong-un and Kimi Räikkönen or Kim Kardashian is that the effect of the former's consumption of suffering of some other others is straightforward. That is to say that the causality is easy to make out, at least so it appears. When North Korean leaders spend all the money on various luxury items it happens at a great cost to the people, according to popular discourse and wisdom. They have access to lot of things that many of us in the west have access to and ordinary North Koreans do not. Not to mention that at the same time the ordinary North Koreans hardly have access to food.

The collage named Luxurious Kims juxtaposes the various Kims and the luxury consumption. All the images used in the collage are a result of an image search with the term "luxury kim" and through repetition it emphasizes the similarities of the luxury consumption of various Kims, mainly the North Korean Kims and Kim Kardashian.

---

<sup>32</sup> Thanks to Petri Koikkalainen and Ari-Elmeri Hyvönen for these interpretations which inspired me to address this by way of making the collage before the Daily Mail utilized the Kim Jong-un and Kim Kardashian juxtaposition in advertising their website in the U.S. with a tagline "The Kims. They're on the same page." <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20131121000698>





[IMAGE “Luxurious Kims” 2013]

In this specific case, demonization and ridicule of one man’s luxury consumption effectively serves to erase the problems of luxurious lifestyles elsewhere. We versus them is a definitive binary in the constitution of adoration or contempt of the possessor of luxury items. North Korean Kims’ luxurious lifestyles appear in popular imaginary at least implicitly in contrast to those of “us” whose lifestyle is similar. Yet the harm inflicted to others by “our” luxuries is so much more complicated to trace because it happens through global capitalism and its complex structures of production and consumption. Those of “us”, like Kimi Räikkönen or Kim Kardashian, who have managed to achieve a certain luxurious lifestyle can simply be adored and seen as fulfilling a dream even though this happens at a cost to some others, but those others are so distant and the causality so complex that we rarely think about it. There may well be other (gendered) reasons these characters are ridiculed, but them wanting to own luxury items is hardly a source of laughter.

What this discussion is getting at is that similar markers, in this case various luxury items, have different effects on political sentiments depending on who has them. The same logics are at play here in regards these highly public individual political bodies (remember the body in all its variations as understood this work is always political) as in the case of collective political bodies such as state actors, namely nuclear wannabes. According to these logics, the political bodies and their actions (whether individual or collective) are read differently depending on their standing and status in the global hierarchies. Here individual political bodies of certain Kims and their luxury consumptions are juxtaposed, while elsewhere in this work the focus is more in the national and hegemonic political bodies.

Understandings that emphasize the symbolic dimension and prestige value of nuclear weapons also play into this dynamic. When horizontal nuclear proliferation is seen as a means to gain prestige, the nukes become yet another luxury item to be coveted. In many narratives of Kim Jong-il, the luxury items seem to fill a void in his life. He was described as overcompensating for his loneliness by acquiring more and fancier items, nuclear weapons being one of these.

Seeing nukes as yet another luxury item, filling a void in lonely guys life, brings me back around to what was problematic about the date ad video parodies. Nuclear weapons (and other weapons as well) are also intensely linked to male sexuality on a symbolic level as will be discussed in the next chapter in the section on viagra politics. Nuclear proliferation efforts not only “breed the idea that nuclear explosions give a ‘virility’ to the nation which men as individuals can somehow also share” but they also can legitimize aggression and violence (Cohn & Ruddick 2004: 418) similarly as those videos can do.

Kim Jong-un, on the other hand, is not similarly lonely and desperate character as his dad was described to be (especially in various parodies). He has publicly appeared with his wife, who has also been spotted wearing designer clothes and other luxury items. Kim Jong-un and his wife are depicted as trendsetters and style icons, sometimes this is done seriously and other times it’s again a parody.<sup>33</sup> The marriage of Kim Jong-un and the public nature of the relationship is in the west used to mark

---

<sup>33</sup> For parody see e.g. <http://www.functionmen.com/blogs/news/7462640-celebrity-style-guide-kim-jong-un> For more serious depictions, see e.g. [http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html\\_dir/2012/09/06/2012090600984.html](http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2012/09/06/2012090600984.html) and <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/northkorea/8957668/Kim-Jong-Un-becomes-unexpected-style-icon.html>

the differences between him and his father. This difference leads to speculations about differences in leadership styles. Because the trope of the desperate and lonely Kim Jong-il was so strong and his world political actions were seen as him acting out, now this public nature of the marriage of Kim Jong-un incites hope in the west. The couple are depicted similarly to royal couples with all the speculation of the pregnancies of the recently married western princesses.

## 6 Wannabe 2 - Iran and photoshopped missiles

This chapter starts from the assumption that even when Iran has not developed full nuclear capabilities in technical or technological sense, its nuclear weapons exist and are working in our political and popular imaginary. These imaginary nuclear weapons already work to construct how we understand the realities of nuclear proliferation and nuclear order and how we understand our and Iran's place in the world. (cf. Masters 2003: 5) The nukes are already operating on this level, even if not realized materially, through the metaphors and images evoked when talking about them and visualizing them: "Metaphors and imagery are not merely inert devices which aid description and explanation; rather they are doing discursive work through their significations and circulations." (Masters 2003: 5) When the nukes already operate on the imaginary level, they are significant in terms of arising and intensifying political sentiments.

Discussions of nuclear proliferation have to do with faith and fear, in other words political sensibilities about the future and in the future (cf. Holmes 2009). Actual and potential changes in the nuclear order enable and create sensibilities in similar vein as shifts in the wider world order do (cf. Aaltola 2009, ch 2). These changes, or anticipated shakes and tremors felt by our individual and collective political bodies, and the political sentiments related to them are mutually constitutive. There are uncertainties brought about by the potential changes in the nuclear order and by extension the contemporary world order if and when new countries proliferate, especially countries that we have deemed unreliable (axis of evil, rogue states). These uncertainties need to be managed, and one way of coping can be through laughter.

Laughter as a political sentiment, has an ordering function and hegemonic laughter in relation to instantiations of nuclear proliferation can restore order, or a sense of order, at least temporarily. The parodies examined in this chapter are Western spectacles of laughter, or in other words instances of hegemonic laughter.

Why parodies such as these ones are important to pay attention to is first the speed at which these things circulate in this internet era. That is to say that it can often

happen that we actually encounter a parody before the event it parodies, which may have consequences to how we understand the international and what we know of the international in the everyday. Popular understanding of nuclear proliferation and nuclear order can be argued to be largely based on anecdotal data and storytelling based on anecdotes. The internet plays a role in the circulation of the anecdotal data, information and disinformation, which is circulated at an increasing speed. Once a rumor takes hold, it is difficult to discredit it. It is not like someone can run corrections to the stories and everyone would read it, as is more likely when it comes to the traditional news media.

Secondly, some parodies manage to pass as the real thing, when they are well executed and play into strong stereotypes. An example of parody that has gone unquestioned and been circulated uncritically in social media such as Facebook, because it reinforces stereotypes, is a website (discussion forum) of Landover Baptist Church. There is an element of trust to the social media, when your friends share links containing specific information, you might not check the sources yourself. Furthermore, on the internet, it is sometimes hard, if not impossible to verify the credibility of some sources, or it is too time consuming so most will not bother. A good example is the afore mentioned discussion forum, which is a very elaborate parody of fundamentalist christianity in the U.S. In the spring of 2011, several discussion threads<sup>34</sup> were making rounds on Facebook along with comments that were expressing disbelief at “how crazy can those americans be” or even comments on “this can’t really be real”. Yet, the people posting did not do a simple Google search, which would have revealed immediately that the site is a parody. Even the site’s terms of service state that posted messages “may be a complete parody, joke or satire as written by us”<sup>35</sup>, but this sentence in the middle of about 3,000 word long block of text that imitates legal language.

This is an example of where parody is probably meant to be subversive, but in another cultural context ends up reinforcing existing sensibilities and prejudices, and othering the fundamentalists.

Yet another issue with the Landover Baptist Church site, which complicates the picture of who and what we’re laughing at, is that there is no way of knowing which people posting are part of the parody or if some of them are serious. In some ways

---

<sup>34</sup> e.g. <http://www.landoverbaptist.net/showthread.php?t=61771>

<sup>35</sup> [http://www.landoverbaptist.net/faq.php?faq=vb\\_faq#faq\\_tos](http://www.landoverbaptist.net/faq.php?faq=vb_faq#faq_tos)



it enforces the parody if some fundamentalist Christians participate in the discussion. Also the parody turns around when someone who thinks it is for real participates and starts to argue with the views she believes are posted by true fundamentalists. One could possibly find all these things out, but the point is that we most likely do not do so. We glance over the site, or a discussion quickly, as we do with most things online and are left with impression that might be more or less accurate.<sup>36</sup>

How this relates to the case at hand, to nuclear wannabes, is that there is a lot of anecdotal data, textual and visual, flowing around regarding Iran and even more so North Korea. We might or might not pay attention to this anecdotal data at various points in time, but it does form a significant part of the popular imaginary on the nuclear wannabes.

The visual parodies analyzed in this chapter obviously cannot pass for anything that really happens, but what they can do is to draw from, play into, and reinforce the already existing gendered nuclear order and Iran's position in it.

## 6.1 Setting the Stage: Parodying Iran's Photoshopped Missile

Moving on to the incident that brought about a surge of parodies that really inspired me to get into looking at what is going on with parody, humor, and laughter and nuclear wannabes. There was one specific instantiation of Iranian nuclear proliferation, namely a missile test on July 9, 2008. What happened was that Iran was reported to have tested nine missiles, and an image of four missiles taking off was released to the global media. It soon enough became clear that one of the missiles in the image had failed to take off, but was photoshopped onto the image, which was circulated in global media.<sup>37</sup>

---

<sup>36</sup> See Brennan (forthcoming) for a discussion on John Protevi's Political Affect how people are primed to believe certain rumors, because they are readily available in the cultural bank of prototypes.

<sup>37</sup> See the images e.g. on the New York Times blog "The Lede"

<http://thelede.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/07/10/in-an-iranian-image-a-missile-too-many/>



What unfolded in the mainstream media when the tests were first reported reads like a typical episode in the masculinity game of proliferation, whereby Iran was seen as attempting to defiantly show its might and to boldly flex its military muscle.

When an actor, such as a state, does something in the arena of global politics, which is already saturated with gendered meaning, the actions can be interpreted as for example manly or wimpy (cf. Cohn 1993, Wadley 2009). Muscle flexing and defiance are actions coded as masculine, as feminist critics of gendered security discourses have for long highlighted (cf. Duncanson and Eschle 2008). Moreover, the linkages between sexualized phallic imagery and legitimization of nuclear proliferation have been demonstrated on many occasions. The original image of four missiles taking off published by the Iranian officials was seen as a provocation, an attempt to send a message to the rest of the world through visual means. What this message is, in terms of masculinity game, an attempt to establish manliness and manly potency in order to be taken seriously in the global arena.

The image was distributed by the global news agency Agence France Presse (AFP), which reportedly had obtained it from the Web site of Sepah News, the media arm of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards, and it spread fast around the globe. It was immediately published on major internet news sites and printed the next day in major western newspapers, some on the front page.

The fact that the missile was photoshopped into the image, which was released first, was first discovered by blogger(s) (e.g., LGF 2008) and the newspapers, which had published the photoshopped image, ran corrections the next day. A bunch of parody images emerged in the 'blogosphere' soon after the discovery. A quick look to some of the images can be found for example on fark.com (FARK 2008) or in the Wired's Danger Room (Shachtman 2008). What is common to all the images is that none of them evokes the consequences of using missiles and/or nuclear weapons. In this sense they transcode technostrategic language into visual form. This tendency to abstraction, euphemistic language, and explicit focus on technology when talking about nuclear weaponry, hides the human costs of development and potential using of them (cf. Cohn 1987a). For feminist anti-militarism this is problematic because the association of abstract thinking and sophisticated technology with masculinity privileges talking about these issues over feminized issues such as concerns about potential physical and emotional damage to people.

As Carol Cohn (1987a: 693) points out the intent of the individuals who use explicitly sexual imagery in their speech, or in this case when producing these images, cannot be read from the imagery itself no matter how tempting it might be. That is to say that, based on these images, we cannot draw conclusions about the individuals behind them, of their character or motivations. Rather, the explicitly sexual imagery does not originate in the individuals producing these parody images, but arises from a broader cultural context in which certain ideas, concepts, and practices are coded masculine and others feminine in the frame of heteronormativity (cf. Cohn 1987a: 693-4, Peterson 2009). Moreover, to turn this around, this is precisely why these images can tell us something about the broader cultural contexts, which are about the ways in which the global nuclear order is gendered and sexualized and how the hierarchical global nuclear order is maintained.

Some intent, however, is clear when it comes to these internet parody images. There is a clearly explicated intent of attempting to be funny and by extension trying to impress other users on the same internet forums or on the blogs. The blogs and discussion forums where the images appeared are specific cultural sites and there are codes/conventions of commenting, linking and giving praise for the best and most clever images and what seems like a bit of competition of who is first, i.e. fastest, and who is most clever in designing and releasing the images. The competitive nature of the parody practices on the internet contributes to these surges of parody images relating to a specific event, like the photoshopped missile incident discussed here.

In what follows, I will analyze groups of parody images first along the axis of masculinization and feminization and then moving on to the more sexualized imagery. The first two sub-sections of this chapter, in other words, will examine gendered nuclear proliferation through the interplay of masculinities and femininities, and how they are always in hierarchical relation to each other. The last two sub-sections of this chapter will focus on more sexualized masculinities and their failures.

The questions that have guided the analysis in this chapter are: When laughter is understood as a political sentiment reverberating between and among political bodies, as I have argued for, what then is going on with these parody images? In which ways does the laughter, which results from these images, operate in reinforcing or dismantling existing hierarchies?

## 6.2 Failures and alternatives

Who are we laughing at and why are we laughing (that is if we are laughing)? Most prominent group of parody images in this instance where the kind that depicted an excess of missiles shooting all over the place. Some with a caption “photo: Sepah Iranian government media agency”.

This particular kind of image can be read as making fun of the assumed mistake of the government news agency releasing the photoshopped image in the first place. Furthermore, it emphasizes the multiple failures going on at the same time: failure of launching all the missiles, failure when releasing the “wrong” photo to the world, the failure in getting caught of doing a bad photoshop job, failing at simple and complex technical skill (photoshop=simple, missiles=complex), failing to control the public international image.

These an audience question in all of this: what are the audiences of these specific images? There are several audiences of the originally released photoshopped image and of the parody images. The former image’s audiences were the domestic Iranian audience and the international audience. The above failures are all failures of the system, of the state, in relation to the outside/international audience. Then again, all these parodies also can imply the failure of the domestic audience, that is the Iranian people who are gullible enough to believe the propaganda of the photoshopped image. Whereby the ones making and looking at these parodies and laughing at them are the clever ones who can spot fakes and have critical media reading skills. That is ‘us’ the western well-educated audience.

However, Iranian state institutions and people are not the only ones who failed. There is also the juxtaposition between mainstream media and bloggers, which relates to wider ongoing changes in media and publishing. The western mainstream media that published the originally released photoshopped image failed at fact-checking and became an object of laughter while the bloggers were the clever truth revealers.

There exists a totally alternative reading, too. It emphasizes the cultural context and history of aesthetics when looking at the first released photoshopped image, and

posits that in the context it is possible to read the image in terms of harmony vs. disharmony. This alternative interpretation<sup>38</sup> opens a space to contest militarized and masculinized international politics when looking at the photoshopped image purely in aesthetic terms. In such an interpretation the image locates in the old Persian and Islamic art tradition where repetition, symmetry, and harmonious patterns are central features (e.g. Pickover 2001: 31; Dowlatshahi 1979). Repetition creates balance in the image, which reflects an underlying ideal of unity and orderliness (cf. Khanam 2005: 654). Thus the intent might not be to appear more threatening, but simply to create a more beautiful image.

If it is not so much a question of a cover-up of a failure, but a question of harmonious aesthetics why the image was photoshopped in the first place, then this reading turns the 'us and them' relation upside down in that it is us who fail to interpret the image in its context. It may well be that Iranian's can spot the photoshop but value the aesthetic more and it is us who are reading too much into the image's release.

This alternative reading is total in that it does not fall back on the masculinity game of international politics and thus can open up spaces to contest this game.

### 6.3 Excessive Masculinity

As mentioned, the most common category of the parody images consists of variations of the same theme: depictions of an excess of missiles (e.g., Nizza 2008). These missiles are most commonly shooting all over the place in disorderly fashion and in some images, the missiles turn back on themselves. What is immediately readable from these types of images is the sense that the situation is out of control. This is a very common narrative in academic and popular discourses that nuclear wannabes, especially Iran, are irresponsible and likely to be accident-prone, unlike

---

<sup>38</sup> Thanks to Colin Foster for directing me towards this alternative interpretation (Politics of Aesthetics course at University of Lapland in the fall of 2008). For spaces of contestation of securitized and militarized practices see e.g. Shapiro 2009.

the more responsible existing nuclear states. Consequently, these common narratives at the least imply, if not explicitly express, a sense of worry that the situation might at any moment slip out of control if nuclear wannabes are allowed to proliferate.

Iran is understood here as a political body that appears gendered by way of these parody images in relation to other political bodies, such as other states, or broader political bodies. Therefore, not only is Iran as a political body present in these images, after all, it was Iran who undertook this missile test, but also other political bodies are implied. This is because gender is hierarchical and relational. Hence reading these images in a way that says something about how the political body of Iran is gendered, also says something about its position in the global hierarchy and how others in that hierarchy are gendered at the same time. Also, wherever this specific political body is located in the global hierarchy already affects the ways in which it is/will be gendered.

In contemporary world politics, Iran is located on the bottom rungs of the hierarchical world order as indicated by the names politicians and academics alike have given it: names such as axis of evil and a rogue state. This positionality has implications for how Iran's performances of gender are read and interpreted. That is to say that similar exercises of military power, for example, from some other state higher up in the hierarchy, may not get read as much as a rebellion and defiance, but simply as a normal state of affairs. In turn, the way the performances of gender are read, solidify Iran's place in the hierarchy, at least temporarily. In other words, it is a mutually constitutive relationship where performances of gender and hierarchical order reproduce each other.

Attempts to assert masculine military power are read differently depending on the actor's relative position in the global hierarchy. Or rather, similar actions may not even be really read as much of anything when undertaken by some states. That is to say, that testing and showcasing weaponry might seem as a normal course of action, when done by a state one of "us", not wanting for much analysis. On the other hand, the states that are named rogues or axis of evil are under constant scrutiny and speculation.

These parodies incite laughter with an aim to humiliate. Humiliation, in turn, reproduces and reinforces existing power relations. Humiliation is a gendered emotion, which is structured in a way that privileges and enforces hegemonic masculinity assessing one's "rightful place in the social order" (cf. Mendible 2005).

When these parody images are read as aiming to humiliate, the laughter that they incite questions Iran as a masculine actor of world politics. As world politics is a highly masculinized realm where one has to perform specific kind of masculinity to be taken seriously, or to speak the language of hegemonic masculinity in order to be heard (cf. Banerjee 2005: 11), the failures in performances of masculinity can bring about laughter of relief because the social order that may have been temporarily threatened is again restored.

Various political bodies are allowed to display and perform different kind of masculinities. Parodies and laughter can be means of controlling and restraining masculinities and policing the boundaries of masculinity. National political bodies, that is states, are commonly associated with masculinities (often these associations remain vague and invisible, but they are nevertheless there) that are rational and controlled. This requires that there is neither excess nor lack of masculinity.

Iran is often depicted as likely to lose political control over its military and consequently over nuclear deployment. While the familiar narrative feminizes Iran depicting it as incapable of establishing internal control and dominance and thus potentially unstable and chaotic, these images add a twist to the narrative through a mobilization of excessive amount of phallic missiles. The images are simply oversaturated with signs of the masculine (cf. Weber 1999: 11) and produce hypervisibility of masculinity.

Here it is useful to juxtapose Iran with another actor from the top of the hierarchical world order that has continuously performed and established hegemonic masculinity. When this kind of actor, for example the U.S., is faced with crisis of masculinity which happened as a result of the vulnerability caused by 9/11, it can turn into hypermasculinity and endorse “vengeful and militarized reactions and obsession with order, power and control” (cf. Nayak 2006; Maruska 2009). The promotion of hypermasculinity in order to save one’s self-identity requires infantilization, demonization, dehumanization and sexual commodification of others (see Nayak 2006). If read uncritically and dismissing the problematic effects on the others, it can be said that hypermasculinity overemphasizes elements of masculinity that are commonly seen as positive or desired, that is order, power and control, and it can be even seen as a successful restoration.

Turning back to Iran, which resides in lower positions in the global hierarchy, hypermasculinity appears in a different sense, not resulting in restoration of order



and control but even further loss of them. As stated above, gendered performances are read differently depending on the relative position of the actor in the hierarchical world order. Following from this, the actors on the bottom can attempt to assert their masculinity for example by exercises of military power, such as the missile test discussed here, but these assertions are more likely to fail. Hence, in this case the excessive masculinity or the hypervisibility of masculinity in the form of phallic missiles turns into a hypermasculinity in a different sense than that possible for the U.S. This hypermasculinity, immediately slips away, spinning out of control instead of creating a sense of control. This hypermasculinity is gross and deficient and its counterpart is not hyperfemininity or any other form of femininity but the restrained and rational masculinity of the old, and presumably rational, nuclear states.

Depicting excessive and gross masculinity of a wannabe nuclear state, these parody images contribute to the maintenance of the global nuclear order, whereby some nuclear arsenals forever remain unproblematic. In other words, these images incite laughter at “them” and their failures with nuclear weaponry while trusting that “our” nuclear arsenals remain secure and under control.



[IMAGE: Details from “Avantgarde IR” 2013]

## 6.4 Feminizations

Other kinds of parody images circulated in this instance utilizing familiar popular culture imagery. Some of this imagery is more and some less iconic and immediately recognizable, of course depending largely on the viewer's pop culture knowledge. The more easily recognizable imagery originates in Science Fiction and action movies and includes images for example from "Star Wars" and "Matrix". Godzillas, dragons and other monsters are also featured in many of these images, along with imagery from video games. I view and analyze these images from the point of view of pretty general pop culture knowledge, someone with a more expert knowledge on the specific pop culture artifacts referenced in these images could perhaps do a more nuanced reading, but as my larger point is to address the general gendered and sexualized understandings of world politics in the everyday, this overall analysis should suffice.



In terms of analyzing masculinities and femininities in this particular instant there are internet pop culture specific images that I group with the images referencing movies and video games. These images belong to internet specific genres such as 'LOLCat',

demotivational posters, and 'Epic Fail'. These internet parody genres encompass any and every topic imaginable; therefore, it is no surprise that they appear in this case. Nonsensical placement of objects in place of missiles (see below) or using the missile test photo(s) as basis for these genres can be playful fun-making, yet again it also plays a part in making sense of nuclear proliferation as a whole and by extension of global hierarchies.

What is common to both of these groupings of parody images that draw upon pop culture, is the way in which they can be seen to position some political bodies in

relation to some others. That is to say that, although there is no certainty of who most of the creators of these parodies are, it is clear that they are considered as somewhat technologically savvy. Technological skills and expertise are qualities strongly associated with masculinity. Similarly, SciFi as a genre and video games are usually perceived as manly. Furthermore, they and these internet genres, along with technological skills, are associated with a specific kind of masculinity. This nerd masculinity might be often presented as non-hegemonic masculinity when contrasted with “manly men”. However, on most axis of intersectionality the individual political body of the nerd comes out as privileged. The stereotypical nerd, after all, is white educated heterosexual male in a Western country, who has enough time on his hands to and technological know-how to create these parody images.

In contrast to the political body of the individual nerd or group of nerds, Iran emerges in these parodies as technologically backward. Not only does it fail to launch all the missiles, but it also fails at computers and photoshop. So much so “that even Ray Charles can see that fuck-up” (FARK 2008). By making collectively fun of Iran’s failures posits the individual selves (nerds) and the wider political bodies (national or the west more generally) they belong to as technologically capable. When the technology, for example in this case photoshop, is presented as a very simple tool, Iran’s failure to use it results in feminization, because technical inability is associated with femininity.

Even more straightforward and explicit linkage to femininity appears in groups of images that repeat the familiar feminizing through infantilization and domestication. Similarly as the referent object of security in the technostrategic language Cohn (1987a: 711-12) studied was the weapons and weapons systems themselves, not human beings, the main point of focus in this group of parody images are the missiles themselves. The missiles have nonsensically and playfully been replaced with various objects including babies, bananas, oilcans, pacifiers, cows, teenage mutant ninja turtles, cats, twitter birds, Hello Kitty Pez-dispensers (see e.g., Alsays 2008), and even George W. Bush. Not all of the imagery seems to make a whole lot of sense; it rather looks like replacing the missiles with random objects.

Without drawing out all the possible intervisual linkages, it is safe to say that at least the babies, pacifiers, and toys infantilize while the animals and bananas have a domesticating effect by replacing the missile with something that could be patted (cf.



Cohn 1987a) or petted or consumed. Both infantilization and domestication diminish the threat of these specific missiles, and by extension other missiles as well.

Associating missiles and nuclear proliferation with something furry, cute, and domesticated as happens when cats of the LOLCat genre are used in some images further domesticates the missiles. Cats are also commonly linked to femininity (while dogs, particularly big dogs are perceived as masculine), so domestication and feminization work together here.



[IMAGE: Detail from “Orange Iran” 2014]

The cuteness of the pink Hello Kitty Pez-dispensers diminishes the threat by explicitly feminizing and infantilizing simultaneously. Pez-dispensers are refillable candy dispensers which are mainly seen as children's toys, but are also collectors items. Hello Kitty as a character is gendered, i.e. strongly associated with femininity, but not sexualized. Because she, as many other cartoonish characters, lacks genitalia (cf. Hjorth 2003). Asexual and childlike femininity is commonly perceived as harmless and unthreatening in contrast to various sexualized femininities commonly found in popular culture. Think of the femme fatale, for example.

To reiterate, by way of feminization, infantilization and domestication these kind of images function in diminishing both the threat of nuclear Iran and missiles as weapons in general, because missiles appear through these parodies as something harmless, toylike, randomly funny and something easily controlled because they can be petted, patted, or consumed.

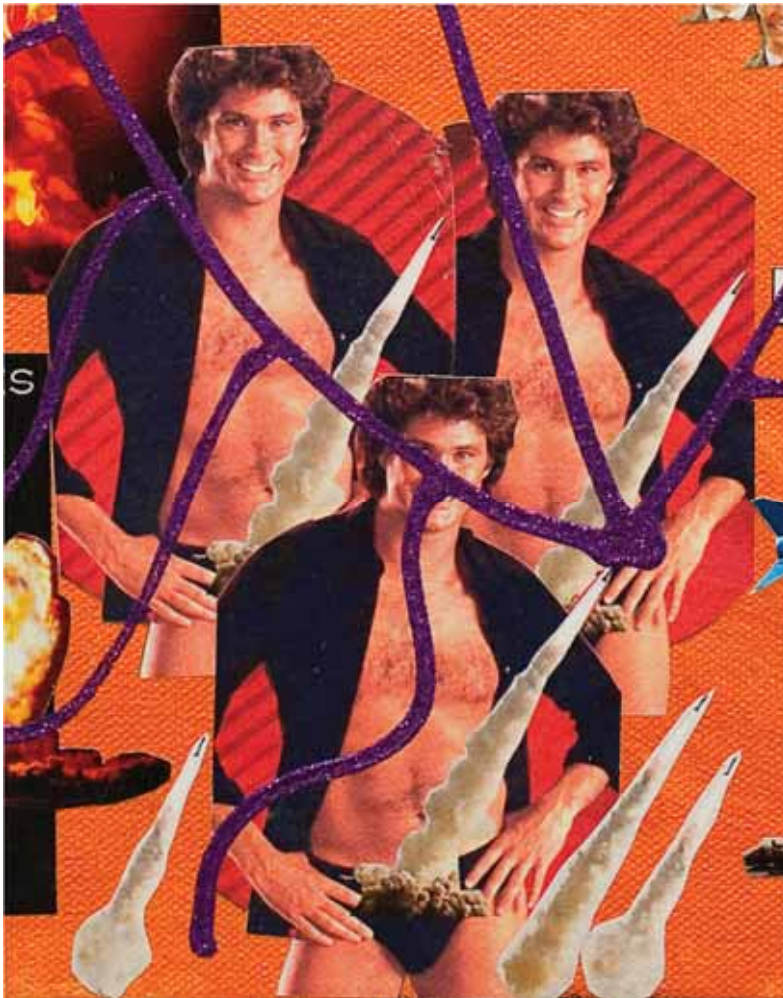


[IMAGE: "Hello Militarized Kitty" 2013]



The collage above exaggerates the pink glittery femininity associated with the Hello Kitty figures and all the paraphernalia in which the figure appears. The collage started with the image in the middle, which was part of the collection of parody images that appeared after Iran's unsuccessful missile test. The rest of the images in the collage were found through a Google search with keywords "hello kitty missile". It was quite surprising to see how many different images this search produced, some are toys, but some are not. What then happens when Hello Kitty itself becomes militarized, or does she, when attached to real guns, and toy bombs? Because, again, meanings do flow both ways.

## 6.5 Missile envy



[IMAGE: Detail from "Orange Iran" 2014]



The analysis now turns to explicitly sexualized images, which in themselves collage the 'original' and the 'original photoshopped' images with various other images and some ad-like materials. The first example of this overtly sexualized imagery was found on a discussion forum and it depicted the missile (that was photoshopped into the first image Iran released to the world) shooting out of David Hasselhoff's (as Knight Rider) crotch with the caption "Words cannot begin to describe how awesome this pic is".

It is not always clear to casual or professional followers of global politics how gender and sexuality are relevant in relation to nuclear weapons and proliferation, as has become apparent to me over the years having to explain what it is that I am researching. However, these kind of images manifest the connections clearly. Why we would find this awesome or hilarious has to do with the obviousness of these connections that draw upon a cultural reservoir of meanings attached to nuclear weapons and proliferation.

Parody functions in reference to already existing imagery, in other words the link between male sexuality and missiles as phallic symbols is quite self-evident when the missile is added on to an image of macho character such as Knight Rider. Such a macho character can easily become an object of envy and thus this image brings me to the concept of missile envy.

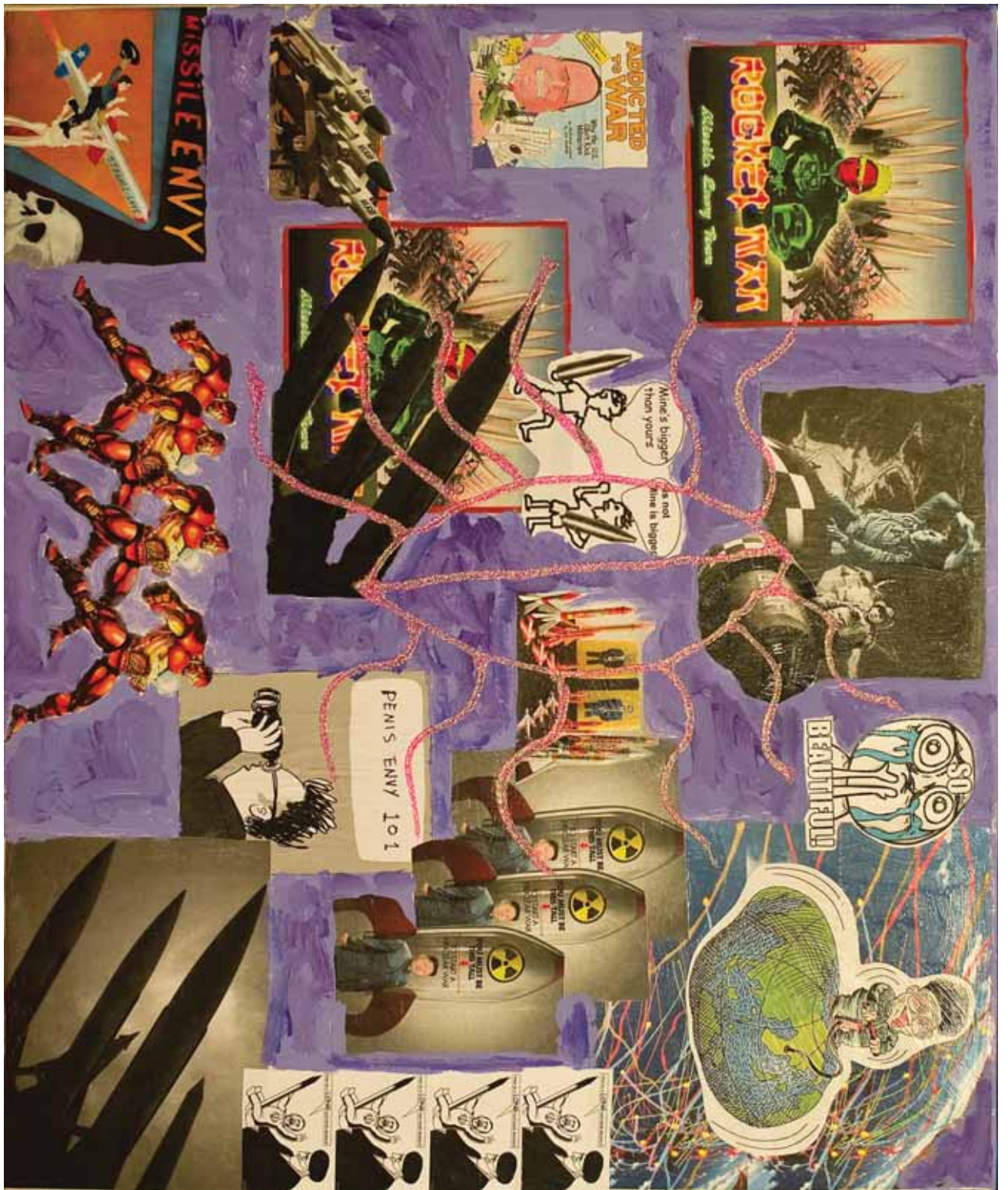
Although missile envy as a sole explanation for nuclear proliferation is insufficient and overly reductionist it props up regularly in more and less serious popular discourse about both horizontal and vertical proliferation, including Iran's wannabe nuclear status (cf. Caldicott 1986; Cohn 1987a). Helen Caldicott (1986) coined the term missile envy during the cold war, it offers a Freudian explanation for arms race, according to which acquirement of nuclear weapons, and parading of missiles were attempts to establish masculine prowess in the global arena. According to Caldicott, the psycho-cultural rationale underlying the arms race between the two superpowers and especially U.S. positions was missile envy, that is to say, an idea that bigger is better when it comes to both size of the bombs themselves and the size of the arsenal.

Interestingly enough, the figure of the Knight Rider (Michael Knight) originates from the same cold war era as the concept of the missile envy, as the original TV series ran 1982-86. At the time when the U.S. was led by president Reagan who used to play a cowboy in Hollywood movies the fictional individual political body of the

Knight Rider symbolized a modern and more high tech version of the lonely rider or cowboy imagery. Whether the lonely rider rides a horse or a highly intelligent car, as Michael Knight's KITT is, this imagery is central to popular culture masculinities that originate in the U.S.

This specific image can be seen as a junk feminist collage in itself as it is based on "camping it up". By using exaggeration as a method of composing an image, it makes the obvious connections between machismo and (nuclear) weaponry hypervisible. Looking at this image it is impossible not to make those connections, at least if the viewer is at all immersed in Western popular culture, which most of us are. This image easily reads as boasting, that 'ours are bigger than yours' in the context where Iran failed to 'get it up' (as discussed in more detail in the next section), thus 'our' masculine being in the world is secured. As Miettinen argues in regards to superhero comics and the geopolitical fictions of the U.S. the superhero masculinities constitute a particular vision of idealized national identity (cf. Miettinen 2013: 18). Therefore the 'us' can in this case on the level of everyday popular imagery be understood as both the U.S. national political body, but also the hegemonic political body of the West, lead and protected by the U.S. because the figure of the Knight Rider in the image resonates political sentiments beyond the U.S.

The collage Missile Envy uses images from a Google search with key word "missile envy" visualizes the concept and how both nuclear wannabes are linked to the concept. It also points us towards another layer of gendered cultural logic beyond the most obvious layer of sexualized phallic masculinity illustrated by the Knight Rider image. The deeper layer that emerges when one scratches the surface of obviousness is the performance based masculinity and the ways in which it constitutes militarism and global politics. In other words, masculinity has to be enacted and constantly proven to others, which is not only something that applies to the collective political bodies, but to individual ones as well. Furthermore, the militarized performances of masculinity can become addictive and thus hard to dismantle.



[IMAGE: "Missile Envy" 2013]



## 6.6 Viagra politics

Metaphorically, weaponry in general and nuclear weapons more specifically are closely associated with male sexuality at least in Western cultures. The conflation of penis with a weapon has been utilized and visualized, for example, in a MTV safe sex / AIDS awareness campaign of Portuguese origin (released July 2007).<sup>39</sup> The ads included images of bullet inside a condom and a penis-shaped bullet, both laying on asphalt ground. This says something disturbing about our everyday understandings of male sexuality, if it the penis is seen as weapon-like. Of course, this sort of campaign is meant to be “edgy” and disturbing to get attention. Nevertheless, this campaign serves as an illustration of the wider cultural context where weaponry and male sexuality are interlinked. The ways in which specific performance-centered male sexuality is conceptually linked with nuclear weapons became apparent in the case of Iran and the photoshopped missile.

The two ad-like images analyzed in this section are prime examples of visualization of the associative connection between nuclear weapons and male sexuality. Drawing from prototypical cultural imageries of masculine potency these images inscribe hegemonic heterosexual masculinity upon the missiles (cf. Masters 2003). The first of these ‘ads’ (Douglass 2008) supposedly targeting Iran whose missile test failed and offering a fix to the problem is a parody image using texts from Viagra ads: “ED [erectile dysfunction] is more common than you think. Get the facts about ED” and “Viva Viagra”. The image is a variation of the non-photoshopped image that shows one of the missiles staying on the ground, but with the notable difference that the second missile from the left has lost its momentum and instead of shooting up is falling down while the billowing smoke forms an arch instead of a straight upward line.

Viagra is well known to most of us through the media, popular culture and our email accounts when the spam filters are not effective enough. Viagra is a material

---

<sup>39</sup> see <http://thesocietypages.org/socimages/2013/10/07/safer-sex-psas-conflate-the-penis-with-a-firearm/>

<http://www.coloribus.com/focus/top-safe-sex-ideas/10172905/>

<http://www.coloribus.com/focus/top-safe-sex-ideas/10172955/>

<http://www.coloribus.com/focus/top-safe-sex-ideas/10172855/>

technology, a globally marketed treatment for erectile dysfunction caused by medical reasons. Furthermore, it is used also 'recreationally' and is widely available on the internet without a prescription. (cf. Loe 2001: n1) As cultural technology it plays a role in "producing and reshaping gender and sexuality under the guise of technoscientific progress" (Loe 2001). What Viagra promises is to fix the problem when what is understood as normal male sexuality, namely the erect and penetrating kind, fails. It is understood as one answer to the cultural and personal crisis of masculinity and is thus employed as a 'tool' to treat the said crisis or to avert it altogether by enhancing heterosexual male confidence and power. (Ibid.)

The focus on performance and penetration, which are also intricate part of the imagery of warfare and weaponry and their perceived effectiveness (cf. Cohn 1987a), hypersexualize masculinity into hypermasculinity. Viagra is actively made sense of in terms of trouble and repair (Loe 2001). What, then, is the trouble here? Iran fails to perform, and to 'get it up'. But not to worry, this is a common problem for other manly states as well and the good news, for Iran, is that there is a fix for this problem. The fix that is effective and quick, yet expensive, thus available to anyone with sufficient funds. With Viagra Iran can achieve masculinity and become a 'Manly State' (cf. Hooper 2001) and to (re)gain confidence and power. On the other hand, the good news for a viewer identifying with the hegemonic body politic of the West and worried over Iran's nuclearization and its effects on the global nuclear order, is that these missiles are unlikely to penetrate anything. The shivers felt, when the status quo of global power configurations were in danger of shaking, can turn into a sighs and laughter of relief.

Similarly to Viagra, weapons technology is not only material but a cultural and symbolic tool used by countries to achieve a better standing in the global hierarchy which gender underpins. Nuclear weapons are the most militarized aspect of global politics, which can be seen as a quick fix to insufficient masculinity performed by a state. As an Indian politician commented in 1998 that the nuclear tests proved they are not eunuchs (Duncanson & Eschle 2008). Those that are somehow lacking in the masculinity front thus attempt to achieve 'normalcy' in terms of gender and sexuality with the help of the drug or nuclear weapons technology. However, it also those that were previously deemed as normal that now increasingly seem to be in need of fixing. In the era when "the 'magic bullet' for sexual energy, confidence, and masculinity comes in the form of a pill ... large numbers of primarily heterosexual males join the ranks of those with bodies deemed in need of 'fixing'" (Loe 2001).

When the previous normalcy turns into perceived deficiency, the new normalcy is hyperpotency (cf. *ibid.*). In a similar vein, global politics can turn into series of “iterative bouts of hypermasculinity” (cf. Agathangelou & Ling 2004). If the old normal code of conduct was speaking the language of hegemonic masculinity (cf. Banerjee 2005), with the lead of the hypermasculine post-9/11 U.S. we at least were on the verge of pushing global politics as a whole towards cycles of hypermasculinity.



[IMAGE: Detail from “Orange Iran” 2014]

Following the success of Viagra, other products have been developed which claim to have similar effects. The second ‘ad’ parody image features one such product. Enzyte is a herbal product that supposedly provides “natural male enhancement” and the character in the advertisements for it is known as “Smiling Bob”. At first glance, this parody invites a similar reading as the Viva Viagra ‘ad’. It offers a quick fix in a form of technoscientific invention. However, once we know that the manufacturer’s claims about the product’s effectiveness have been widely questioned and eventually the owner of the company was convicted of federal felony, the



interpretation changes. The question is, as USA Today headline put it in 2002, “Why is this man smiling? It’s not viagra” along with naming Smiling Bob “the ever-grinning pitchman for Enzyte” (Rubin 2008). There is an overflow of signs of masculinity (missiles/”Missles”, sports car, salesman) in this image (cf. Weber 1999) and it is thus hypermasculine, but again masculinity seems to be slipping away.

No matter how much Bob smiles, the missile stays on the ground.

It is important to remember that the signs of masculinity flow both ways. Not only can missile technology be seen as Viagra-like technoscientific fix for some national political bodies, but also consumers using Viagra make comparisons to weapons (and also cars and steel). By doing so they “attribute masculine characteristics such as power, resilience, hardness, and strength to the Viagra penis, essentially constructing Viagra as a tool for producing masculinity, and enforcing social meanings” (Loe 2001). The last two images analyzed were produced in response to the missile test and the photoshopping incident, but they could well have been real ads for the products as well. These images most of all raises the question who are these parodies about anyway or where are we in all this and what is our relation to these images.

The same questions should and can be asked about all of the parody images. On one hand it is clear that these parody images are collectively making fun of Iran’s failures to master both simple and complicated technology, namely photoshop/computers and weaponry. It is easy to laugh at “them over there” while feeling a sense of superiority and relief, because after all the nuclear threat implying ever impending doom was not here yet. On the other hand, this is about other collective political bodies too and the relationships between the various collective bodies. The West and the U.S. on top of the global nuclear order, hanging on to the nuclear arsenals trying to uphold the contemporary world order by the ‘magic’ of this weapons that cannot reasonably be used, ever.

Maybe nuclear weapons are more like Enzyte than Viagra, full of promise but unable to deliver.



[IMAGE: “Orange Iran” 2014]

## 7 Global nuclear hierarchy, regimes of laughter and limits of compassion

While the last two chapters have played around with individual and national level political bodies with some hints towards the wider constellations of political bodies, this chapter moves explicitly towards these wider constellations and more specifically towards the boundaries of the wider possible political body, the human polity. The central issue is how the boundaries of the human polity are constituted by regimes of laughter drawing the limits of compassion. If we take seriously Bergson's claim that laughter and emotions are mutually exclusive, i.e., that an absence of feeling usually accompanies laughter (Bergson 2002/1911: 11-12), it makes sense to juxtapose politics of laughter with politics of compassion. I will do this by examining invisibility and visibility in relation to North Korea particularly and touching upon nuclear proliferation as a whole.

The idea, which lays the groundwork for this chapter, is from Aaltola (2009) that when it comes to political sentiments there are some that are directed towards the hegemonic and powerful political bodies and towards the world order, which is defined and steered by the hegemon. Particularly compassion is one such sentiment, which can even be argued to be a key sentiment in the contemporary world politics. Furthermore, when it comes to visibility in contemporary global politics, humanitarian imagery, especially images of suffering, form a crucial genre that arises and orients our political sentiments especially towards the individual political bodies of distant others, but also towards the wider national and hegemonic political bodies.

What has tickled my feminist curiosity (as my curiosity can never be divorced from feminism, even when gender is not explicitly present in a given issue) about politics of compassion vis-à-vis nuclear wannabe North Korea, that there is a lack of images of suffering while it is a known fact that there is an ongoing humanitarian crisis in the country.

Humanitarian images of suffering are a prominent contemporary genre of world political photography and many humanitarian organizations use them to arouse



political emotions such as compassion in us and to encourage us to donate to their funds (see e.g. Käpylä & Kennedy 2014; Kennedy 2012). In late 1990s there were some typical humanitarian images of a malnourished North Korean child published around the world (see Shim 2014: 48-52), but these kind of images are rare in the North Korean case when compared to other humanitarian crisis. Why these images are mainly missing in the case of North Korea could be explained away by the nature of the regime and limited opportunities for anyone to take and distribute such images.

The reason for the lack of images, however, does not matter as much as the politics of laughter and the highly visible parodies (examined in chapter 5) juxtaposed with the invisibility of suffering and politics of compassion. While the current chapter may feel out of place after the more lighthearted ones focusing on the humorous and laughable, it is an important addition to this collage-like work as a whole because it adds other, more serious, aspects to the collection of fragmented everyday knowledge that we in the west seem to have about a nuclear wannabe. These more serious aspects and fragments seem to, however, vanish away in the moments of laughter *at* North Korea.

This collage-like chapter maps the shadowy and playful mutualities of nuclear proliferation and humanitarianism and addresses the limits of compassion as they appear in juxtaposition with the regimes of laughter. It is a thematic and conceptual collage, which first addresses the limits of compassion and potentialities of humanitarian imagery when it is used in the context of anti-nuclear campaigning and then moves on to a discussion on invisibility of suffering. In the last three parts of the chapter, I examine three recent curious cases that relate to the juxtaposition of laughter and compassion vis-à-vis North Korea. These are Rodman's trips to North Korea, hair as a human rights issue, and hegemonic laughter at crying North Koreans.

## 7.1 Humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons and anti-nuclear campaigning

There is a recent move of political activism, which addresses nuclear weapons and nuclear proliferation through the lens of humanitarianism. This is to say that the impacts of nuclear weapons and proliferation are framed as humanitarian issues. Precisely, the question being addressed is what are the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons (Article 36 2013). World political actors such as the International Campaign for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) are raising this question. In other words, they are explicitly attempting to reframe the global political debate on nuclear weapons to account for the suffering and potential humanitarian crises caused by nuclear weapons (e.g. ICAN 2012).

Nuclear weapons are conventionally discussed in terms of security, strategy and deterrence and only some of them are seen as a problem, while others (those possessed by the nuclear haves) remain at least implicitly legitimate (cf. Cohn & Ruddick 2004). Of course, over the years, many initiatives have reminded the club of old nuclear states that they should be reducing their arsenals and aiming for total non-proliferation as stated in the NPT, but relying on humanitarian frame to make this argument is a new development. I posit that this move justifies the claim that humanitarianism is one of the key frames of contemporary world politics because it is being stretched to cover other issue areas, such as nuclear proliferation, that might not at first seem to fit within the humanitarian frame. If the humanitarian paradigm, indeed, functions as a frame within which various world political position themselves in the global hierarchy and through which they evaluate each other's legitimacy (Aaltola 2009: 1), then it makes sense for NGOs such as ICAN and Article 36 to draw from humanitarianism to advocate against nuclear weapons and question their legitimacy altogether.

Thus, it appears that drawing from the humanitarian frame is seen today as an effective strategy to achieve their stated goal of banning nuclear weapons. The perceived effectiveness of the humanitarian frame for this sort of activism arises from previous successful campaigns to ban specific weapons (e.g. landmines) by appealing largely to humanitarian sentiments and by using the means of visual politics, which is an intrinsic and increasingly studied part of the humanitarian

paradigm (e.g. Käpylä & Kennedy 2014; Kotilainen 2011). In other words, the campaigns used images of suffering caused by the specific weapons, especially the harm they caused to children who may innocently go play on a minefield and lose their limbs.

Most of the images, for example, in the ICAN pamphlet *Catastrophic Humanitarian Harm* (2012) draw from contemporary humanitarian imagery which are used not to show the direct effects of nuclear explosions but the indirect effects resulting from environmental changes. The familiar and conventional humanitarian imagery depicting malnourished children appears here, while incidentally some of the humanitarian aid imagery itself has already moved on from the imagery of passive suffering children (e.g. Käpylä & Kennedy 2014). ICAN also uses images from landmine campaigns and an explicit link to the success of the campaign is made by statements such as “Some governments tell us that a nuclear weapons convention is premature and unlikely. Don’t believe it. They told us the same thing about a mine ban treaty.” (Anti land mine campaigner and Nobel Peace Prize winner Jody Williams in ICAN 2012)

There is, however, a problem with this move to humanitarianism in anti-nuclear campaigning, particularly when it comes to visual politics. The problem is that it is much easier to show visually the humanitarian effects and the devastation, caused by landmines than it is to show the potential effects of nuclear weapons. When it comes to nuclear weapons we only have one case from almost 70 years ago where they have been used while landmines still exist all over the globe. Imagery depicting women-and-children (cf. Enloe 1989), especially children, is much easier to utilize to spark sentiments such as compassion when it is contemporary imagery. Current imagery fits within the visual humanitarian frame easily and creates a sense of urgency.

The appeals to the humanitarian sentiments in many humanitarian campaigns rely on the images of suffering others and the images are aimed at diminishing the distance between the audience and the sufferers (cf. Sontag 2004: 91). In the case of nuclear proliferation, the potential suffering is much more abstract than in the case of many contemporary humanitarian crises. For example, the ICAN pamphlet (2012) shows a few images of burnt flesh and burnt landscape that date back to Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and a few from later nuclear tests. There is a double distance, geographical and temporal, between us looking at the images and those whose suffering they depict. There are hardly means of visualizing the possible suffering



caused by nuclear weaponry with contemporary images of individual suffering unlike in the case of other humanitarian issues. If so, can the appeals to humanitarian sentiments ever succeed in the way this campaign seems to aim for?

Of course, these anti-nuclear campaigns drawing from the paradigm of humanitarianism do not only focus on nuclear wannabes, but the goal also is getting rid of all nuclear weaponry. In other words, to also delegitimize the nuclear arsenals of the existing nuclear states. However, the limits of compassion are not only related to the lack of images straightforwardly depicting the (potential) suffering caused by nuclear weapons, but also to how we understand nuclear proliferation in the everyday.

The nuclear wannabes are the ones that in the popular everyday imaginary represent nuclear proliferation. The issue's seriousness culminates in the nuclear wannabes, thus it is crucial to pay attention to how they are portrayed and depicted and to juxtapose those (largely) parodic representations with these other kinds of visualizations of nuclear proliferation.

If our (western) popular imagination about wannabe nuclear states is dominated visually by parody imagery and if laughter and ridicule define our everyday understandings of North Korea and Iran, it might have serious implications in many ways. It might prevent us from taking these countries seriously and seeing the real suffering that is going on. The political sentiments emerging from everyday depictions of nuclear wannabes constitute a curious mixture of fear and ridicule. This became strikingly evident on social media feeds almost daily especially in early 2013 when North Korea was reportedly issuing warnings and declarations of war and the western media seemed to hype up these threats. On one hand there seem to be very serious fears about North Korea and its nuclear weapons, while on the other hand the whole country is seen constantly as ridiculous and laughable.

## 7.2 (In)visibility of suffering

Imagery of suffering, but even more importantly the lack of such imagery in particular situations, can not only pose limits to compassion but also define who we understand to be part of the human polity and where the boundaries of this broadest possible political body are being drawn.

Visual imagery can “pin us to the scene through heightened sensory awareness of the precariousness of life” (cf. Sylvester 2009: 180), this may especially be true of images and artwork depicting pain and suffering. Furthermore, particularly when it comes to artwork: “[p]aintings can become sites where geographical extremities and bodily extremities articulated one another. Human bodies in paintings, and especially those visually demonstrating pain, can represent and reveal imperial pains” (Aaltola 2009: 3). This is to say that *particular* human bodies can become to represent particular wider political bodies: nations, regions, or hegemonic body politics. Some bodies can represent the empire in pain as Aaltola argues, or the briefly seen falling man on 9/11 can come to represent not only the U.S. but also the hegemonic world order, which was seen or feared to crumble at that specific moment. Consequently, this kind of imagery can function in a way that evokes our awareness of not only the frailty of human life, but of the vulnerability of a nation or a wider political order as well.

This awareness can be pushed further to “interrogate the emergence and vanishing of the human at the limits of what we can know, what we can hear, what we can see, what we can sense” (Butler [2004: 151] quoted in Sylvester 2009: 180). In other words, while images of suffering can be examined in a way that evokes questions about the limits of the human, also the lack of such imagery can point us to the boundaries of the human polity. There is a double standard at play in how this works, while some suffering (and dead) bodies are not shown in the name of decency because they are fully human (that is westerners), others are shown to direct political sentiments their way (humanitarian imagery) and some other others are just not shown. In a discussion on Sudan, David Cambell (2004) argues how context matters. Shortly, “[i]n relationship to images, context involves three dimensions: the economy of indifference to others (especially others who are culturally, racially and spatially foreign), the economy of ‘taste and decency’ whereby the media itself regulates the

representation of death and atrocity, and the economy of display, wherein the meaning of images is produced by the intertextual relationship of captions, titles, surrounding arguments and sites for presentation” (ibid: 70).

Lacking “photographic evidence” of the suffering in North Korea, the western popular political imagination on the country can be argued to consist of anecdotes and rumors, where parody imagery plays no small part. In the case of North Korea is not (western) media itself, which regulates the representation of suffering, but the totalitarian state that has limited the images available. On the one hand, we hear stories of Kim Jong-il’s and Kim Jong-un’s extravagant lifestyles, and “joy divisions” while on the other hand, we hear rumors of the everyday suffering of the people, who in general have neither food nor electricity. Parodies and other laughable things are what is at display most often on the internet and what circulates on social media.

By juxtaposing the invisible suffering with politics of laughter, the human polity and its boundaries start to emerge.

In the case of North Korea, the imagery of bodily suffering is largely non-existent in contrast with other humanitarian crises where the suffering is highly visible to the western viewers through media (new and old). While in 1997 an image of a starving child was used successfully to obtain donations and food to North Korea, it was also seen to produce embarrassment to the nation (Shim 2014: 50-51). Because these images are rare, North Korean suffering rather only haunts our everyday political imagination (on haunting, see Gordon 1997/2008; Zalewski 2006). The ghost like figures representing the suffering people do sometimes appear in parody images, as seen in an editorial cartoon, which was reacting to a North Korean missile test in April 2009, drawn by Patrick Chapatte.<sup>40</sup>

The humanitarian crisis is frequently mentioned in the public discourse on North Korea, but it is not talked about with the same sense of urgency as some other humanitarian crises, for example Darfur which is similarly ongoing, but a lot more visible crisis. Sudden natural disasters such as the 2010 earthquake in Haiti are perhaps qualitatively different cases of humanitarianism, but can serve as a useful point of comparison nevertheless. To simplify a bit, humanitarian crises, whether longterm or sudden ones, are often ‘sold’ to the general public via images of suffering

---

<sup>40</sup> Available at <http://www.politicalcartoons.com/cartoon/4ab8b45f-b453-4d0c-bc2d-d697bd5cbf54.html>

nameless women-and-children in order to arise the public's humanitarian sentiments and willingness to help. Of course, many aid organizations are very much aware of the criticism of their conduct in this regards and the imagery is increasingly more complex than that. (e.g. Kennedy 2012; Käpylä & Kennedy 2014; Kotilainen 2011). The haunting suffering of a crisis, which seems to drag on and on, is much more difficult to sell and thus a lack of demands to "do something" politically prevails.

Humanitarianism is generally understood as being defined by "an inclusive entity of 'humanity'" (Aaltola 2009:8). Moreover, "[t]he central idea behind this envisioned community is that in a human polity all individuals are of equal worth and, thus, deserving of assistance if in need" (ibid). This universality underlying humanitarianism is based on a view that the enterprise of humanitarianism is apolitical, and thus it knows no territorial or civilizational boundaries. However, this is not really the case. Neither humanitarianism nor the human polity are all encompassing.

The notion of universality, on which the supposed all inclusive nature of humanitarianism relies on, has been widely problematized, as well as the concept of humanity as an overarching and all-encompassing category. To treat universality, humanness and international politics as unproblematic, and to treat humanitarianism as apolitical, would miss the operation of power in defining these concepts in the first place, and in how they are put to use in world politics in order to justify and legitimize actions and policies while staying completely silent on other similar issues. Looking for the limits of compassion is one way of approaching how humanitarianism plays a significant role constituting the human polity and its boundaries. Humanitarianism works in mobilizing the concept of 'humanity' to serve political and/or military ends (cf. Douzinas 2007: 5).

It is tempting to think that belonging to the human polity is, indeed, a universal condition, a possibility that we all have. However, the shape and meaning of the human polity is not fixed and it is by no means a universal condition. In other words, it is not devoid of power differentials in a way that would make all of us equal parts and participants in the human polity. Human polity is not something that we all belong to by way of our humanity; on the contrary, its boundaries are constantly being drawn and redefined.

In general humanitarian imagery used by aid agencies, to evoke the humanness of the suffering other in order to arise compassion and thus motivate donations, might

have become more nuanced than mere nameless women-and-children, but remains fairly limited in variety (cf. K  p  l   & Kennedy 2014). Limited representations of any group of people, for example nationality such as North Koreans or a whole continent such as Africa are highly problematic because they tend to over-determine how we perceive the group as a whole. Furthermore, they limit our abilities to understand and recognize various forms for suffering and the way different groups of people suffer due to their relative positions in various hierarchies. In other words, they frame our interpretations: “although restricting how or what we see is not exactly the same as dictating a storyline, it is a way of interpreting in advance what will be and will not be included in the field of perception. [...] The regulation of perspective thus suggests that the frame can conduct certain kinds of interpretations.” (Butler 2009: 66.)

The humanitarian imagery as a whole is problematic, but even more so is the almost complete lack of such imagery in the case of North Korea. The dominant representations, be it visual or textual, of North Korea link to its aspirations to build nuclear weapons. In other words, North Korea exists in global politics mainly as a nuclear wannabe, not in any other role. This has implications as to its legitimacy as a world political actor and for the existence of North Korean people as subjects in global politics. “The existing humanitarian framework provides a vital source of legitimacy in the present world order *for all those who can tap into it*. As in any order, the hierarchical element of the contemporary human polity designates those who benefit and those who do not” (Aaltola 2009: 9, emphasis added).

Because of the invisibility of suffering, the North Korean people can hardly tap into this framework. Those who can tap into the humanitarian framework can rely on photographs: “rather than merely referring to acts of atrocity, the photograph builds and confirms these acts for those who would name them as such” (Butler 2009: 70). When in the case of North Korea the photographs of suffering are non-existent, there is no need to name the atrocities as such and North Koreans are not constituted as grievable subjects.

The point here is that the invisibility of suffering in the case of North Korea fails to draw in our compassions and thus pushes the people of North Korea beyond the boundaries of human polity, as they don’t appear as grievable subjects in the registers of our imagination. Rather, the suffering people of North Korea remain as haunting figures that hover somewhere beyond of the human polity. The very last part of this

chapter comes back to this point from bit of a different angle and in it I address the perceived over-emotionality and lack of emotions that has come up in relation to the North Korean people.

### 7.3 Celebrity politics: Rodman's trips to North Korea

There is a growing literature in IR and political science that addresses the role of celebrities in humanitarianism and politics more widely (e.g. Yrjölä & Repo 2011; Yrjölä 2014; Cooper 2008; Chouliaraki 2012a, b). The nuclear wannabe North Korea has recently been involved in celebrity politics, when a former NBA star Denis Rodman has visited the country. His first trip took place in February and the second trip in September of 2013.

Celebrities can be seen as political bodies, which mediate our political sentiments, in other words they direct our feelings for individual, national and hegemonic political bodies. Usually, as in the case of celebrity humanitarians, their role is to orient our compassion towards the suffering others or towards Africa as a whole (see e.g. Yrjölä & Repo 2011; Yrjölä 2014). The difference between the celebrity humanitarianism and this curious case of celebrity politics when Dennis Rodman visited North Korea is the role of laughter and ridicule. Rodman did not go to North Korea to mediate our compassion towards the invisible suffering, but on the contrary, he appeared to want to mediate our compassion towards Kim Jong-un. Yet, as a result he managed to intensify laughter at North Korea.

Celebrity humanitarians are generally taken seriously, whether their actions are seen as positive or looked at more critically. In contrast, Rodman's case was mainly about ridiculing both him and Kim Jong-un. When his two trips in 2013 were reported, Rodman became not only a mediator of laughter but also the mediator of the anecdotal knowledge of North Korea and of its leader. He repeated the old anecdotes when reporting about Kim Jong-un's love of American sports and 1980s disco music, his love of basketball supposedly being inherited from his dad.



Rodman, who reportedly calls Kim Jong-un his friend and an awesome kid (Guardian 2013) is a known controversial figure himself. Heavily tattooed and pierced basketball star, who during his career in the NBA also dyed his hair various ‘weird’ colors (weird in mainstream standards, not mine). Rodman has a bad boy image and he is known also for pushing the gender boundaries, e.g. by wearing a wedding dress to promote his autobiography. What is this bad boy doing traveling to North Korea and hanging out with the probably worst bad boy in global politics? Besides luxurious and extravagant partying and watching both of their favorite game - basketball. He becomes a curious source of knowledge on North Korea, which is seen usually as an unknown or even unknowable (cf. Shim 2014: 2).



[IMAGE: Detail from “Gluttonous Kim” 2013]

Rodman may well wish to appear apolitical similarly as the many humanitarian celebrities do, but humanitarianism is far from apolitical and so is this odd friendship. The reports of Rodman’s visits are another link to the chain of anecdotes that keep being circulated. When Rodman also functions as a mediator of the anecdotal knowledge he contributes to the production of the heteronormative credibility of Kim Jong-un, because he has been the sole source of the reports announcing the name of Kim’s baby girl (Walker 2013). Unlike Kim Jong-il who was seen as

desperate lonely guy, estranged from his family and surrounded by luxury items and joy divisions.

By way of Rodman, Kim Jong-un starts to appear as more humane, as Rodman often emphasizes that he's "just a regular guy", "one of us". But which us? Rodman effectively humanizes a specific elitist type of consumer subject, disco-loving basketball dude, while the North Korean people remain invisible. In other words, while Rodman's intentions may be good and noble, nothing happens to bring in the North Korean people and their humanity even if Kim Jong-un's humanity and ordinariness appears.

Finally, in relation to celebrity politics, humanitarianism, and nuclear wannabes, there are particular hierarchies at play and being constituted. A-list celebrities have their causes, mainly in Africa, think of George Clooney and Darfur, Bono, Geldof, Angelina Jolie, and Madonna in various African locations (cf. Yrjölä & Repo 2011). When it comes to the nuclear wannabes Sean Penn, also an A-list celebrity, has been known for his activism and trips to Iran. There exists this hierarchy of celebrities, as A-list in contrast to B, C, or D-list demonstrates.

Dennis Rodman does fall short from an A-list status and his appearance in a celebrity rehab reality show, especially, may lower his status even to a D-list character. The whole North Korean ordeal started out also as a reality show thing (HBO show hosted by Vice magazine) therefore in one way the whole "bizarre" North Korea is just a ploy to raise Rodman's status and make some entertainment for the rest of us.

Thus, celebrity hierarchy comes together with the global nuclear hierarchy and the humanitarian frame of world politics, and they end up reinforcing each others, keeping North Korea at the very lowest bottom rung of global order and the North Korean people to remain invisible and beyond the human polity itself.

## 7.4 How hair became a human right issue

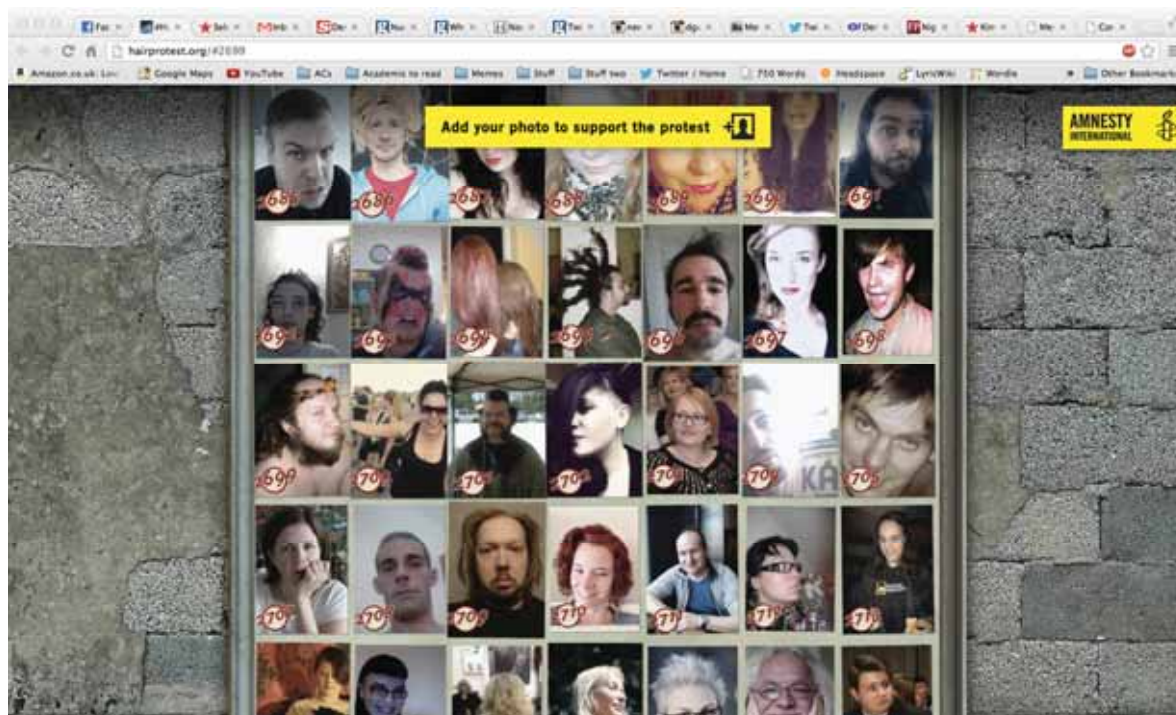
In late March 2013 links of “#Hairprotest” started popping up in my Facebook newsfeed. It appeared to be an Amnesty International campaign, started in Poland, which aimed at collecting 28,000 images of different hairstyles, wanting to highlight the absurdities of the totalitarian system.<sup>41</sup>

The description of the campaign: "It's not about hair. It's about human rights in North Korea. North Korea is one of the last communist regimes in the world and by far the most fearsome. The authorities intend to maintain the control through oppressive actions which are becoming more and more ridiculous. What you see above is the list of 28 officially approved hairstyles in North Korea. They are obligatory for all citizens and are supposed to repel 'corrupt capitalist ideas and lifestyle'. If you live in a free world, join our protest and add your hairstyle to the list. They will create the longest photo petition ever which will be sent to Kim Jong-un and other North Korean authorities. There is also a chance that global support will reach the citizens, since the regime has lately allowed the limited internet access. Let's turn 28 into thousands!"<sup>42</sup>

---

<sup>41</sup> <http://hairprotest.org/> The website is no longer available in June 2014, screenshot of the campaign is still available at Grey Poland website: <http://greyemea.wordpress.com/2013/03/19/hairprotest-by-grey-poland-for-amnesty-international/>

<sup>42</sup> March 25th 2013 6:36pm GMT +2, Hairstyle No. 2961 has joined. November 19th 2013 there were total 4894 of hairstyles.



[IMAGE: screenshot of some of the images submitted to the #HairProtest, including one of my husband]

I use this case to illustrate the circulation of anecdotal knowledge. I tried to trace the origin of the images depicting “official” hairstyles by following links and searching for the starting point, but could not find out for real whether this is true. It could well be just a picture of hairstyles, and not about sanctions. The headlines of stories that could be located through following links from this campaign site are themselves interesting. After all, in these hectic times, how often do you read much more than the headline of most stories you come by on the internet or in social media? Thus, the headline often has an important role of what we know of an issue in the everyday.

There is a link from the above description on the hairprotest.org website to Huffington Post (2013) which references and links back to a story on website called NK News (2011). The NK News story is titled more modestly “Select your hairstyle” as the recent headlines are: “North Korean Hairstyles: Pyongyang Salons Display Menus Of State Sanctioned Trims (PICTURES)”, “North Korea issues a list of 28 approved 'socialist' hairstyles. It seems tyrants hate long hair” (Stanley 2013) and “Capita list: North Korea approves 28 model socialist hairstyles” (Kuo & Storrar 2013).

The first and the last of these stories depict the same images of the 28 haircuts, but only Huffington Post credits the images to the Associated Press (AP). Huffington Post displays the women's and men's hairstyle pictures separately with captions for each image. Respectively: "This is how we do it: State-sanctioned hairstyles on display at a salon in Pyongyang, North Korea" and "Men are advised to keep their barnets to a length of 5cm (with 2cm leeway for balding men over 50)" while the Want China Times has put the two images together with a caption: "The 28 state-approved haircuts. Kim Jong-un's own 1990s grunge style is curiously not among them. (Internet photo)" (Kuo & Storrar 2013). Curiously enough, the blog by a historian Dr. Tim Stanley on the Telegraph website has an image of Kim Jong-il with a caption "Oddly, Kim Jong-il's terrible bob didn't make the officially approved list" (Stanley 2013).

What does humor and laughter have to do with all this? There is obvious sarcasm in some of the headlines and captions, but that is not all. The stated goal of the campaign itself is to ridicule the official state apparatus. Kim Jong-il's character was for long an appropriate laughing stock, but here the object of ridicule is not as personalized as it was and is when parodies and laughter were centered on Kim Jong-il and are on Kim Jong-un. The "great successor" incites much laughter and ridicule, but is not yet as an established character in our popular imagination as his father was.

Interestingly, this un-personified object of our ridicule, North Korean state that sanctions hairstyles, is foregrounded at the exact moment when the state starts to open up more to the rest of the world. These stories popped up as a direct result from this opening up when Associated Press Korea Bureau Chief Jean Lee and photographer David Guttenfelder have been posting on Instagram and Twitter images from North Korea while actually in the country.<sup>43</sup> Guttenfelder posted the images depicting the supposedly official haircuts on his Instagram account on February 20th and 21st, 2013. The internet news stories and blog posts discussed above ran on the same day and within a few days of the posting of these images, but they also referred to an older story from two years ago.

The captions of Guttenfelder's instgram images do not make them official haircuts, but rather examples and choices: "Example haircuts on display at a barbershop in #Pyongyang"<sup>44</sup> and "And here are some style choices for women. #Pyongyang,

---

<sup>43</sup> see: <http://instagram.com/newsjean/> and <http://instagram.com/dgutenfelder/>

<sup>44</sup> <http://instagram.com/p/V8BGyTAwzq/>



North Korea.”<sup>45</sup> There are some LOLs (internet lingo for “laughing out loud”) and other reactions of laughter and ridicule in the in the comments to these images.

The LOLs in the comments of the Instagram images are public performances of laughter and as such, instantiations of laughter as a political sentiment that is not limited to the individual’s body but reverberates through wider political bodies as well. The laughter at someone always creates inclusions and exclusions (cf. Carty & Musharbash 2008: 214), here the laughter and the ridicule creates the hegemonic “free world” that is #hairprotest campaign calls upon to join the protest and submit a photo.

Participating in the #hairprotest might be clicktivism<sup>46</sup> at its finest. If clicktivism has been criticized on being narcissistic, posting your photo as a means of protesting certainly appears that way and turns to attention back to the ones doing the protesting and thus centers the western subjectivity. This sort of mixture of laughter, ridicule and humanitarian action plays out along the power dynamic Douzinas (2007) describes. It divides humanity into three: victims, evildoers and moral rescuers. The victims here are not only nameless but also faceless and they are victims of the evil Other, the tyrannical regime of North Korea. The protesters as moral rescuers are the ones with faces, with the capacity to act, in other words their humanity is intact. More generally, in the case of North Korea the laughter and ridicule add an interesting twist to this dynamic, however. The evilness of the country’s leaders (past and present) often also has comic dimensions that arises out of the way in which the anecdotal and rumor-like knowledge features in popular imaginaries of the leaders. Because of this comic dimension, Kim Jong-il and Kim Jong-un do not quite fit the trope of the evil leader, but rather appear more like caricature, that is Dr. Evil-like.

---

<sup>45</sup> <http://instagram.com/p/V-NO9SAw83/>

<sup>46</sup> Clicktivism, is a form of “slacktivism” and means promoting a cause through social media or other online activity. When associated with humanitarian action it is a sort of humanitarianism light, that is participation that does not require much effort. These terms are usually used to criticize the effectiveness of such action and/or to denote worry that this sort of activity ruins humanitarianism. However the issue might be more complicated than that (see Chouliaraki 2012b).



## 7.5 Why do we laugh when North Koreans cry?

This last empirical chapter ends with this significant question. Why do we laugh when North Koreans cry? When Kim Jong-il died in December 2011 the images of crying North Koreans circulated all over social (and mainstream) media. Especially on social media, the images were accompanied by textual ridicule. The crying was made fun of because it was seen as manipulated and the people brainwashed. Alternatively, it was seen as a forced public performance of grief and as such, it was deemed ridiculous. Effectively, laughing at the collective expressions of grief in this context denied the subjectivity of the people grieving. They were claimed to be inauthentic and these claims North Koreans' individual and collective 'fake' grief contributes to the people being shoved outside of the confines of the human polity.

To be human, after all, is to have genuine emotions.



[IMAGE: detail from "Avantgarde IR" 2013]

North Korean people are denied emotions in many instances, sometimes by way of ridicule as in this case and sometimes by outright statements that they do not have any emotions or specific positive emotions. The limits of compassion are here being constituted in the laughter at the emotionless others whose grief must be staged.

Let's juxtapose this moment of public performances of grief 'over there' with another moment of public grieving 'over here'. The most notable event of public grief happened back in August/September 1997 when Princess Diana died in a car accident. She was another celebrity humanitarian, a significant figure in the landmine campaign, who oriented our compassion towards suffering others. Her death and funeral were huge media spectacles in the west. The funeral service was televised to homes all around the world and immediately after her death there was an amazing amount of public grief, crying people and piles of flowers and memorabilia left outside of the Kensington Palace.

The images of grieving people were shown in the media, but in contrast to the grieving North Koreans, there was no ridicule of these people showing and performing their grief in public. The publicly grieving westerners can also be criticized for demonstrating manipulated sentimentality that is politically motivated, but the criticisms do not contribute to a view where "we" do not have emotions. Our emotions, in this regard, may be silly and over sentimental, yet authentic. Furthermore, the grieving westerners remain individuals and humans while the photos of grieving North Koreans are part of a larger image genre where the depiction of masses of people deny their individuality and by extension humanity (cf. Shim 2014: 7).

Images of grieving North Koreans link to hegemonic representations such as images of military parades and mass gymnastics, which share pictorial similarities with and references to other totalitarian states (Shim 2014: 37). Consequently, the images do not tell us anything we're not primed to believe (cf. Sontag 2004: 9). That is to say, if we're primed to believe that North Koreans grief is manipulated, we will see it as such in these images. If we laugh at the manipulated fools, the laughter in turn forecloses the possibility of compassion (Bergson 2002/1911: 11-12).

Laughing at North Koreans when they cry, poses us in a superior position in relation to them. It emphasizes our sense of self as rational and autonomous beings who are not easily manipulated.





[IMAGE: “Green North Korea” 2014]

Hegemonic laughter can be juxtaposed with plenty of stories that emphasize how ordinary North Koreans or North Koreans in prison camps have no emotions. Some stories focus on the lack of positive emotions such as joy and laughter, but others talk about a total lack of all emotions (see also Shim & Nabers 2013: 297). An exemplary case where North Koreans appear as inhumane emotionless creatures is the human rights activism that focuses around the book *Camp 14* and its author Shin Dong-hyuk who grew up in the camp but managed to escape. Reporting on his experiences repeatedly centers the idea that the prisoners in the camps have no emotions at all. By no means do I want to refute the gravity of the experience, but I just think we should be mindful of these claims. It is well known by now that even in the darkest of situation, e.g. Holocaust concentration camps, people do feel, they have both positive and negative emotions. People can feel even joy in extreme war situations (see Penttinen 2013).

To focus excessively on the lack of all emotions, again, effectively makes North Koreans crucially different from us and moves them violently outside of human polity.

I want to close of this chapter by an anecdote what can happen to “one of us” in this curious mixture of emotions and lack of them. A Finnish circus artist visited North Korea several times and wrote a book about his experiences. In a TV interview, he described his circus act as attempting to bring joy and laughter to North Koreans who do not otherwise ever get to laugh because they live in such a joyless nation (Yle Areena 2013). There are those emotionless North Koreans again. This story, however, takes even a more curious turn. He had gone to see a medical doctor back home for some physical symptoms. When the doctor had asked what he does for a living he had responded by telling the doctor that he had been to North Korea and performed a juggling act with chainsaws. This is what he really does. The doctor supposed that the circus artist is delusional/psychotic and dangerous and consequently committed him to a mental hospital against his will, which is quite a move in a Finnish context. (Kurvinen 2013)

Why would anyone go to North Korea and juggle with chainsaws, right?

While these three cases may appear as anecdotal as lot of the knowledge we have about North Korea, a pattern emerges from these cases together. That is that the North Korean people do not have emotions, thus their suffering may remain invisible too and do not matter as a world political problem.

Denying emotions from a whole population while laughing at caricatures of their leaders, is an act that ultimately others and pushes these people outside of the human polity and at the same time secures “our” humanity and the current world political order.



## 8 Afterword

### 8.1 Left out story that wanted to be told

I started this doctoral dissertation with a reference to negative emotions, namely fear, that often defines the discussions on emotionality and nuclear proliferation. I now want to come back to it because one of the genres of IR that my work partly situates in, but has not explicitly been addressed so far is those works that experiment with narrative modes of writing, including but not limited to autobiography and autoethnography.

The experimental writing style than I have adopted slips back and forth between the more and less serious tone and sometimes brings in autobiographical elements. This relates to recent IR discussions on narrativity, storytelling and autoethnographical modes of doing research. What I think is curious about the last one of these genres (if these genres can be separated from each other) is that it often centers trauma, traumatic experience or some sort of wound as the motivation of both why we are drawn to IR and why we are drawn to experiment with this specific mode of writing. Indeed, I have previously written the story of why I came to study nuclear proliferation as a kind of trauma story. And I will repeat the story here, but have chosen to leave it at the end, because otherwise I think it would've framed the work as a whole too much.

Roland Barthes has been said to state that we research topics we are afraid of or fascinated by (Lehtonen 1999: 138); I think some topics might do both. Personally, I could see that the reasons why I'm drawn to study nuclear proliferation have to do with a past fear. As a young child in the 1980s I remember being deadly afraid of a nuclear attack happening while I sleep. I remember lying in bed in a small town in



Southern Finland being very aware of the superpower next door and the Cold War tensions between the world's two superpowers. Apparently, it is a natural phase in child development, when one realizes one's own mortality, to attach the fear arising from this fact to whatever comes close to at the time. If a grandparent dies of a heart attack at this time, the child might start fearing that she, too, will die of a heart attack. For me it was this world political pain and fear that I felt affinity to.

Retrospectively, I have heard that I participated in anti-nuclear marches with my father and that at the time there was talk about some of the U.S. missiles being targeted to Finland. My earlier, somewhat ironic, interpretation, before I became aware of this talk, was that I was a real techno skeptic and figured that the missiles are going to fall short of their targets in the Soviet Union and destroy Finland. Of course, it would have been dreadful enough to realize the potential destruction and devastation an all-out nuclear war would bring even when the missiles did reach and hit their intended targets.

Now that I'm writing these words, it's been reported that the world did indeed come closer to nuclear war in 1983 than has been previously known. This incident, a war games exercise by Nato, apparently did pose more of a threat than the Cuban missile crisis (see Doward 2013). The timing of the incident does, indeed, coincide with my childhood fears. So, if we take seriously the notion of various political bodies and the political sentiments that move them and shift the relations between them, even I as a child can be seen as an individual political body that sensed those shifts and shakes among and between the wider constellations.

The story continues into the end of the Cold War which started a sort of golden era of (non-)proliferation. Having read Bernard Benson's *Peace Book* with great enthusiasm over and over again as a child, there was a great sense of relief that I can still recall. Even though I was a teenager wrapped up in all the angst and personal issues and perhaps didn't much care, really, but there are those wider sensibilities which shifts in world order bring about that can be felt even by the teenager most wrapped in oneself. Shifts in power hierarchy can be a source of worry when they are seen as regressive (Aaltola 2009: 2) but in this case, the shifts were seen as progressive and they were a source of great joy and optimism.

Especially in relation to nuclear weaponry, the changes were positive as former Soviet states gave up their arsenals, Brazil and Argentina suspended their nuclear programs, South Africa dismantled and destroyed its nuclear capabilities and all three

joined Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT). Indeed, there were worries of nukes falling into the wrong hands, and these worries continue today, but overall sentiments were positive for a while in the 1990s. Thus looking back from now it does feel like a golden era.

This autobiographical story next takes us to a moment in May 1998 when I was preparing for the IR undergraduate entrance exam and India and Pakistan undertook nuclear testing. My reaction was pretty much “all is lost now that they have nukes, too”. All kinds of underlying assumptions there, as I soon enough learned in the course of my undergraduate and master’s studies (taking courses and book exams in Women’s Studies, Peace and Conflict Studies, and Development Studies).

Once I discovered works of feminist IR scholars a few years into my studies the academic path that has brought me in this moment, and this text into your hands, was set. Not that this path has been straightforward in any sense. As I have argued by putting forth a junk feminist collaging approach, for me there is no way of separating the research from the personal and the emotional. Rather, by telling the story above, I wanted to illustrate the complex connections between the two. Also, by inserting some personal stories and anecdotes into the research narrative on the previous pages I attempted to keep the connections between scholarship and life alive and foregrounded.

There is also the coming to feminism story, which often can be told as sort of trauma story. On the one hand, it is completely understandable because feminism, after all, is a response to a sense of injustice, or rather the story is framed not so much as a trauma, but as an awakening of consciousness in the face of gendered injustice, which more often involves serious anger rather than some other more positive emotion. On the other hand, I wonder what does it do to us (our sense of scholarly self) to focus on these trauma stories as a mode of engaging with the whys of choosing our fields of study and topics of our research?

## 8.2 By way of conclusions

“There is no last word, but there has to be some word” - Mick Dillon  
(Rovaniemi June 2009)

It is time to close this dissertation off by putting forth some words by way of conclusions. These are not final words, as my junk feminist collaging approach demands that interpretations are left open and the rough edges can remain visible. The doctoral dissertation, however, as a format demands conclusions, so here we go.

The project I have engaged in during this research process, and in life more broadly (remember junk feminism is a way of being in and of the world) is one of vigilant critique and careful watching and listening. To look at things, social artifacts such as the images and videos parodying the nuclear wannabes, through a junk feminist lens means paying attention to what we laugh at and how that which we laugh at is gendered and sexualized. Through exaggeration and repetition in the actual collages I have produced for this work, the gendering and sexualizing have become strikingly obvious. Yet, as any pieces of art, they leave the interpretations open to the reader/viewer and demand active participation in the process of reading and watching.

“Meaning is generated by the elasticity between associations” - Ellen Gallagher (AxMe catalogue)

For me, the key element in the collages is the above-mentioned exaggeration through repetition, with this I mean to emphasize some associations to specific kind of femininities and masculinities. Furthermore, the repetition serves as a visual reminder of performativity of gender. The elasticity in the above quote by a fantastic collage artist I take as a reference also to the moving and shifting relations between the various political bodies, from individual to human polity and everything in

between. Laughter in its multimodal manifestations frames and constitutes these relations, importantly the relations of “us” and “them”, or of I (we) and the Other(s).

The thing is that my research remains in the confines of the Eurocentric academic traditions. While it disturbs the conventional ways of doing research, it still centers my and our western subjectivity. While I have approached critically the ways in which we laugh at Iran and North Korea, this work does not allow the Other to speak back and does not reverse the gaze (see e.g. Choi 2012: 157-160 for a possibility of a return gaze in the case of North Korea). Hence critical examination of our western everyday understandings of nuclear wannabes and a critical examination of the positions we (individually and collectively, implicitly and explicitly) assume in relation to the nuclear wannabes by participating in these parody memes as producers or onlookers, as entertained and amused audience, is for me a necessary first step, but by no means the last.

The questions driving this research project have been: What work are ideas about gender (masculinities and femininities) and sexuality doing in parodic representations of nuclear wannabes? How does laughter, which arises from these parodies, frame and constitute the relations of “us” and “them”, of I (we) and the Other(s)? How does laughter order the international especially in our everyday understandings? What kind of boundary conditions does laughter create? I have examined these questions by constructing a multilayered collage-like entity that is this doctoral dissertation as a whole. The various collages that form parts of this larger entity range from seeing IR feminisms as a transdisciplinary collage to some of the internet parody images as contemporary collages and to constructing actual pieces of art.

In the first chapter, I set out to present IR feminisms as a transdisciplinary collage and argued for an understanding of the broader discipline of IR as much as an identity and -ism as feminism is usually seen, especially from the outside. This, in my view, would allow us to understand the emotionality involved in our everyday academic endeavors and encounters, further understanding of our scholarly selves and privileges and power we carry along, and lessen the need for aggressive gate-keeping thus providing space for fruitful co-operation between the various camps rather than being stuck in a competition mode. The camp structure of IR (e.g. Sylvester 2007) can also be seen in terms of political bodies as well as any other collective constellation of individual political bodies can. This move would help us to better see the inter-camp politics and power relations that somewhat disappear

from view if the camp structure assumes that all camps are pretty much playing on a level ground.

There is more work to be done to address the –ism-like being of IR and the complicated emotionality it entails. Some of us suffer from a deep dissatisfaction with IR, yet are drawn back in over and over again and want to remain. As Peter Mandaville (2011: 196) put it: “I hate IR, but it’s where lot of my favorite people live... so I keep coming back to it”. When emotionality is not brought into the open like this, it nevertheless haunts all academic everyday practices, and, for example, it is possible to trace the politics of disciplinary emotions through mapping citations (see Soreanu & Hudson 2008).

Furthermore, chapter two laid out IR feminisms and some of the ways they have been presented and classified in previous discussion thus also presenting the background from and upon which my junk feminist position has been built. I hold on to the view that it is integral for (junk) feminism that we read power in multiple directions (Enloe 1989; Sylvester 2002) and IR everyday activities are one of the sites of power that we should pay (more) attention to.

In chapter three, I presented a theoretical collage, bringing together theoretical strands from feminist theory, PCWP and social theory of laughter. First, I laid out my normative position by locating it into the tradition of anti-militarism and anti-war feminism. Because these approaches are intimately connected activism through the peace movement and women’s movement, I argued for a broader understanding of the relevance of our scholarly work than is customary in IR and Political Science. That is, I claim that we should understand our scholarly selves as more than Machiavellian advisors to the policy makers and aim for much wider relevance and accessibility. My own contribution to this end is through the images and art works to make visible the abstract theoretizations of gender in an accessible and joyful way.

Gender can seem like an abstract and distant concept when we discuss the relations between states or other issues where no actual physical bodies are present. In order to bridge this gap, I turned to the notion of political bodies that range from the individual all the way up to the widest possible political body, the human polity. States are most often understood in anthropomorphic terms in everyday and scholarly discussions and they are described as acting in ways that are associated with being a man or a woman, yet the it remains mainly unacknowledged how the arenas in which world political actors engage with each other are always already saturated



with gendered meanings (cf. Wadley 2009: 39). Bringing in the parodies, as I have done, can help us direct our attention to the ways in which various actors are gendered and sexualized, in relation to nuclear proliferation in this case but also more broadly in world politics.

I rely on an understanding that gender is relational and performative and that popular culture cannot be separated from world politics but the two always influence each other, furthermore I have argued that the material I engage with, namely the internet parody images, need to be taken seriously as world political artifacts. This sort of material has so far fallen outside of the scope of both scholarly communities that I position myself in and aim to contribute to, that is, IR feminists and PCWP scholars.

Because gender is relational, performances of gender (which the parodies also are) order political bodies into hierarchical positions in relation to each other. Laughter has a similar ordering function. Therefore looking at the gendered and sexualized parodies through a critical feminist lens directs our focus on how laughter orders the international in the everyday in the specific case of the nuclear wannabes, but this also has wider consequences. Even if the arguments are not directly translatable to some other world political cases or issues, this critical examination teaches us to pay attention to those moments when laughter erupts, and to ask questions about it and about laughter's relation to power. Asking critical questions, after all, is a junk feminist way of being in and of the world!

Chapter four presented my methodological approach of collaging as a scholar, as an artist, and as a curator. I described the intimate and intuitive process of experimenting with making these pieces of art as part of the research process and how I produce them utilizing Google image search and various keywords. Making collages is one way of making sense of the somewhat non-sensical and random collection of material. Because the speed of circulation of stuff on the internet is incredibly fast, any kind of attempt to collect a set of materials necessarily remains random. Thus, collaging methodology engages creatively with the internet as a specific modality of knowledge.

Sense-making is always a sensory process and the visual technique of collage making emphasizes this, as does the receptive part of the process that is left to the reader/viewer when she comes by these art pieces on the pages of this book (or online where better quality images are available). By making the collages and

presenting them as a part of the work, I have also wanted to retain a playful attitude to sense-making and to scholarly work, for both myself and the reader/viewer.

“Truth is not given, but a conceptual drama” - Michael Shapiro (2013)

The empirical chapters five, six, and seven map out and visualize specific conceptual dramas in relation to the nuclear wannabes and their positions in global hierarchies. This also relates to Aaltola’s (2009: 13) playful attitude (drawing upon William James) according to which “[t]he conditions under which we think things are true are not fixed”. The last part of these concluding words will discuss the collages I have produced and presented as parts of these chapters.

My point ultimately is that both laughter and the ways in which various world political actors are always gendered and sexualized affects what appears to be true. As I argue in chapter five about North Korea, anecdotes are central epistemological devices that make knowledge about North Korea’s leaders appear as the truth the more and more these anecdotes are repeated and circulated. While they become ‘the truth’ about a country and its leaders in popular imagination and frame our understandings, other important things remain invisible. A case in point is illustrated by a collage *Luxurious Kims* which juxtaposes the North Korean leaders with other contemporary Kims, mainly Kim Kardashian, and thus visualizes one of the most repeated anecdotes about Kim Jong-il and Kim Jong-un. That is, their fascination with western luxury items.

There are specific politics of rumors (cf. Myrttinen 2013) and circulation of anecdotes in the case of luxury consumption and celebrityness of the North Korean Kims, a morality story emerges whereby their consumption is seen as highly problematic and needs to be stopped by political measures from western powers and international community, while excessive consumption that culminates in western celebrity culture can go on unproblematicized. I’m not saying that the latter is never criticized, but that to be critical of the former is much easier, because there appears to be a much more direct causal link with suffering and luxury consumption over there in North Korea than over here in the so-called western world.

The fifth chapter also contained two other collages: Nuke Kid vs. PSY and Gluttonous Kim. The first of these juxtaposed Kim Jong-un with the neighboring country's pop phenomena PSY and emphasized the boyish and juvenile masculinity of Kim Jong-un, which continues the characterization of his dad as a misbehaving prankster and a bully. There is also a twist of a wannabe celebrity who is jealous of PSY's success, thus the acting up (threatening the world with missiles) now arises from a different motivation than it did with his dad who was a lonely geek. The latter of these two collages more explicitly utilizes memes and is an experiment into incorporating lot of the textual elements so central to memes. It shows how the various themes and characterizations always necessarily overlap when the suffering meets the luxuriousness and the insatiable hunger meets the juvenile and the technological backwardness.

In chapter six, which focused on the Iranian photoshopped missile incident and the parody images that followed, I presented three collages: Missile Envy, Militarized Hello Kitty, and Orange Iran. The Hello Kitty piece was inspired by the group of images that I analyzed as having a feminizing and domesticating effect on how we read Iran's nuclear aspirations. Hello Kitty as a character is a representation of childlike asexual femininity and in all its pink cuteness appears unthreatening and harmless in contrast to many other femininities familiar from popular culture. To replace missiles with Hello Kitties can indeed, by way of this specific asexualized feminization, diminish the threat posed by the specific missiles and nuclear weaponry more broadly, as I argued.

The Militarized Hello Kitty piece opens itself up to a different way of approaching the relations between missiles and other weaponry, too. This question, though, will have to remain unanswered for now. So, what happens when Hello Kitty itself is being militarized?

Missile envy, as an explanatory concept has obviously made it to the public imagination from 1980s academic-activist discussions. Although it remains an unsatisfactory concept academically, it seems to have some resonance on a common sensical level as it is reproduced on many occasions. Well, don't many Freudian ideas, too, keep living on in the everyday common sense?

This specific collage, in my own reading, invites the reader/viewer to ponder on the overlaps and similarities between the nuclear wannabes. The conceptual drama that unravels by way of referring to missile envy as an explanatory mode, circulates back

to the figures and themes discussed in chapter five. The crazy mastermind and juvenile characters of North Korean Kims come together with a baby-Ahmadinejad and the war addicted U.S. The masculinity games of international relations and nuclear proliferation are camped up in this piece as much as in the image of the “awesome” Knight Rider, which appears repeatedly in the Orange Iran collage. This collage also brought together both domesticating LOLCats and sexualizing Viagra(-like) ads, with a touch of defiance.

Chapter seven formed a more serious kind of thematic and conceptual collage and presented a range of issues contributing to the shadowy and playful mutualities of humanitarianism and nuclear proliferation. In other words, I mapped regimes of laughter and the limits of compassion and their relation to visibility and invisibility. The first limit of compassion I traced appears from the flow of images from one world political issue to another, namely humanitarian images of suffering that are used in anti-nuclear campaigning. I argued that this move might not produce the desired results as the potential suffering caused by nuclear weapons is difficult to visualize and simply using images from another realm may not be credible enough.

Other limits of compassion appear from celebrity politics and the constitution of hair as a human rights issue. The ways in which the particular case of celebrity politics, Dennis Rodman visiting North Korea, while explicitly aiming to humanize Kim Jong-un, keeps the North Korean people invisible and beyond the human polity, thus posing a limit to compassion while both Rodman and North Korea are ridiculed and laughed at. In the case of the #hairprotest the object of ridicule turned to the official state apparatus that supposedly controls what kind of haircuts the North Korean people can have while presenting our western freedom to carry any kind of possible hair on our heads. The images posted by individuals are performances that constitute us as free and the North Korean people as unfree, but yet again centering our images and subjectivity and willingness to participate while keeping the North Koreans themselves out of sight.

Lastly, I turned to the concept of hegemonic laughter and asked why we laugh when North Koreans cry and what happens when, in various situations, we keep denying that they can have emotions, too. To be human, is to have emotions, thus all the cases where the lack of emotions keep being repeated pushes North Korea and its people outside of the human polity. While politics of compassion can be criticized

in many ways, the regimes of laughter and especially hegemonic laughter can be even more disturbing and thus need to be examined critically in more detail in the future.

The final chapter featured a collage Green North Korea, which was my first exploration of addressing color explicitly. I've chosen colors for the previous collages intuitively, and haven't given the choices much thought beyond that. This specific collage was inspired by an innovative ISA panel 2014 "Colouring the International" and Shine Choi's 2013 workshop presentation on Grey North Korea. In a Google image search on North Korea, various shades of green appear pretty prominent, while the imaginary of North Korea is often colorless and/or grey.

I have re-articulated here what this whole collage-like work has been about. I have also pointed out some issues that need further examination: the complex emotionality of disciplinarity in IR (why do we choose to stay); looking for the ways in which the collage methodology would allow for the relationality of "us and them" appear in such a way that the Other could come back in and decenter our subjectivity; and relatedly, how to disturb the regimes of laughter and give visibility to the Other, specifically those suffering Others that remain invisible.

The whole research project has for various reasons (e.g. accessibility and resources) remained focused on western laughter and western ways of looking at the nuclear wannabes. The western gaze is important, still, because of the existing global power structures and I think the critique always has to start with ourselves. To bring in parodies and interpretations from elsewhere would likely to add more layers and nuances, and thus broaden the analysis a great deal. But that would be another project, or a whole new iteration of this one.

The Instagram images, which I mentioned as the background of the #hairprotest, have begun to circulate on the internet as collections of images.<sup>47</sup> This raises questions on how this new genre of images of North Korea shapes our everyday understandings of the country and its people and how the politics of emotions vis-à-vis North Korea will shift in the future. Laughter may become less definitive of our everyday relation to North Korea. Because this genre of images is getting wider attention and circulating in social media, questions related to the selection and availability of these more serious images in relation to how and what images get circulated that need further scholarly attention.

---

<sup>47</sup> <http://justsomething.co/41-uncensored-instagramms-from-north-korea-by-david-guttenfelder/>



Furthermore, what has remained outside of the scope of this research project is the actual audience reception of the parody images, which needs serious future research in IR, as does the reception of other popular culture artifacts.

Maybe it is time to move on.

# Bibliography

- Aalto, Pami, Vilho Harle and Sami Moisio. 2011. "Introduction." In *Global and Regional Problems: Towards an Interdisciplinary Study*. Pami Aalto, Vilho Harle and Sami Moisio (eds.) Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Aaltola, Mika. 2009. *Western Spectacle of Governance and the Emergence of Humanitarian World Politics*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Ackerly, Brooke A., Maria Stern and Jacqui True. 2006. "Feminist Methodologies for International Relations." In *Feminist Methodologies for International Relations*. Brooke A. Ackerly, Maria Stern and Jacqui True (eds.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press pp. 1-15.
- Ackerly, Brooke A. and Jacqui True. 2010. *Doing Feminist Research in Political and Social Science*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Agathangelou, Anna M. and L. H. M. Ling. 2004. "Power, Borders, Security, Wealth: Lessons of Violence and Desire from September 11." *International Studies Quarterly* 48(3): 517-538.
- Agathangelou, Anna M. and L. H. M. Ling. 2009. *Transforming World Politics: From Empire to Multiple Worlds*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Alsays. 2008. "Iran: requires photoshop lessons" Website. <http://portablecontent.wordpress.com/2008/07/11/iran-requires-photoshop-lessons/> [accessed: 12 April 2010].
- Armstrong, Carol. 2013. "Ellen Gallagher: Mythopoetics and materials" in *Ellen Gallagher: AxME*. London: Tate Publishing.
- Article 36. 2013. "Understanding the Humanitarian Impacts of Nuclear Weapons". Feb. 7, 2013. Website. <http://www.article36.org/nuclear-weapons/understanding-the-humanitarian-impact-of-nuclear-weapons/> [accessed April 11, 2013].
- Banerjee, Sikata. 2005. *Make Me a Man! : Masculinity, Hinduism, and Nationalism in India*. Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press.
- Barkawi, Tarak and Mark Laffey. 2006. "The Postcolonial Moment in Security Studies." *Review of International Studies* 32(2): 329-352.
- Bergson, Henri. 2002/1911. *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic*. The Project Gutenberg Etext. Transl. Cloudesley Brereton and Fred Rothwell. Available at: <http://intersci.ss.uci.edu/wiki/eBooks/Books/Bergson/LaughterBergson.pdf>
- Billig, Michael. 2005. *Laughter and Ridicule: Towards a Social Critique of Humour*. London: Sage Publications.
- Blanchard, Eric M. 2003. "Gender, International Relations, and the Development of Feminist Security Theory." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture & Society* 28(4): 1289-1312.
- Bleiker, Roland. 1997. "Forget IR Theory." *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 22 (1): 57-85.
- Bleiker, Roland. 2001. "The Aesthetic Turn in International Relations." *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 30(3): 509-533.
- Bleiker, Roland. 2006. "Art after 9/11." *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 31(1): 77-99.

- Bleiker, Roland. 2009. *Aesthetics and World Politics*. Rethinking Peace and Conflict Studies series. Palgrave MacMillan.
- Brennan, Kathleen P. J. Forthcoming. "MemeLife." In *Making Things International I: Circulation* Mark B. Salter (ed.) Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press (Spring 2015).
- Brontsema, Robin. 2004. "A Queer Revolution: Reconceptualizing the Debate Over Linguistic Reclamation." *Colorado Research in Linguistics* 17(1): 1-17.
- Butler, Judith. 2004. *Undoing Gender*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Butler, Judith. 1990/2008. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Butler, Judith. 2009. *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?* Verso.
- Butler-Kisber, Lynn. 2008. "Collage as Inquiry." In *Handbook of the Arts in Qualitative Research: Perspectives, Methodologies, Examples, and Issues*. J. Gary Knowles and Ardra L. Cole (eds.) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications: 265-276.
- Butler-Kisber, Lynn and Tiia Poldma. 2010. "The Power of Visual Approaches in Qualitative Inquiry: The Use of Collage Making and Concept Mapping in Experiential Research." *Journal of Research Practice* 6 (2): 1-16.
- Cambell, David. 2004. "Horrific Blindness: Images of Death in Contemporary Media." *Journal for Cultural Research* 8(1): 55-74.
- Cambell, Katy. 2013. "Reclaiming the C\*\*t." Blog. Jan. 22, 2013. [http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/katy-cambell/reclaiming-the-cunt\\_b\\_2522087.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/katy-cambell/reclaiming-the-cunt_b_2522087.html) [accessed May 15, 2013.]
- Carty, John and Yasmine Musharbash. 2008. "You've Got to Be Joking: Asserting the Analytical Value of Humour and Laughter in Contemporary Anthropology." *Anthropological Forum* 18(3): 209-217.
- Carver, Terrell. 1996. *Gender Is Not a Synonym for Women*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Carver, Terrell. 2003. "Gender/Feminism/Ir." *Gender and International Relations Forum* edited by Terrell Carver. *International Studies Review* 5(2): 287-302.
- Carver, Terrell. 2008. "Men in the Feminist Gaze: What Does This Mean in Ir?" *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 37(1): 107-122.
- Choi, Shine. 2012. *How Do You Solve a Problem like North Korea? Interrogating Culture(s) and Exploring Alternatives*. Unpublished PhD dissertation. Queens University, Belfast.
- Choi, Shine. 2013. "Love's Cruel Promises." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* Published Online 24 May 2013. Available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14616742.2013.790656>
- Chouliaraki, Lilie. 2012a. "The Theatricality of Humanitarianism: A Critique of Celebrity Advocacy." *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 9(1): 1-21.
- Chouliaraki, Lilie. 2012b. *The Ironic Spectator: Solidarity In the Age of Post-Humanitarianism*. Polity Press.
- Cohn, Carol. 1993. "Wars, Wimps, and Women: Talking Gender and Thinking War." In Cooke, Miriam – Angela Woollacott (eds.), *Gendering War Talk*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Cohn, Carol. 1987a. "Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defense Intellectuals." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 12(4): 687-718.
- Cohn, Carol. 1987b. "Slick 'Ems, Glick 'Ems, Christmas Trees, and Cookie Cutters: Nuclear Language and How We Learned to Pat the Bomb." *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 43(5): 17-24.

- Cohn, Carol and Sara Ruddick. 2004. A Feminist Ethical Perspective on Weapons of Mass Destruction. In *Ethics and Weapons of Mass Destruction: Religious and Secular Perspectives*. Steven Lee and Sohail Hashmi (eds.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Connell, Raewyn. 2008. "Preface: The Man Question, Gender and Global Power." In *Rethinking the Man Question: Sex, Gender, Violence in International Relations*. Marysia Zalewski and Jane Parpart (eds.) London & New York, Zed Books.
- Cooke, Miriam and Angela Woollacott (eds.) 1993. *Gendering War Talk*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Cooper, F. Andrew. 2008. *Celebrity Diplomacy*. London: Paradigm Publishers.
- Critchley, Simon. 2002. *On Humour*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Das, Runa. 2008. "Nation, Gender and Representations of (In)Securities in Indian Politics: Secular-Modernity and Hindutva Ideology". *European Journal of Women's Studies* 15(3): 203-221.
- Das, Runa. 2006. "Encountering Hindutva, Interrogating Religious Nationalism and (En)gendering a Hindu Patriarchy in India's Nuclear Policies. Ordering, Bordering and Othering". *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 8(3): 370-393.
- Das, Runa. 2003. "Postcolonial (in)securities, the BJP and the politics of Hindutva: broadening the security paradigm between the realist and anti-nuclear/peace groups in India". *Third World Quarterly* 24(1): 77-96.
- Dodds, Klaus and Philip Kirby. 2013. "It's Not a Laughing Matter: Critical Geopolitics, Humour and Unlaughter" *Geopolitics* 18(1): 45-59.
- Douzinis, Costas. 2007. "The Many Faces of Humanitarianism." *Parrhesia*(2): 1-28.
- Douglass, S. 2008. "Iran you suck at photoshop - internet responds with humor : UPDATED." 11 July 2008. [http://deepbluehorizon.blogspot.com/2008\\_07\\_11\\_archive.html](http://deepbluehorizon.blogspot.com/2008_07_11_archive.html) [accessed: 12 April 2010.]
- Doward, Jamie . 2013. "How a Nato war game took the world to brink of nuclear disaster." Web article. Nov. 2, 2013. <http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2013/nov/02/nato-war-game-nuclear-disaster> [accessed: 2 November 2013]
- Dowlatsahi, Ali. 1979. *Persian designs and motifs for artists and craftsmen*. Dover Publications.
- Drezner, Daniel W. 2011. *Theories of International Politics and Zombies*. Princeton University Press.
- Duncanson, Claire and Catherine Eschle. 2008. "Gender and the Nuclear Weapons State: A Feminist Critique of the Uk Government's White Paper on Trident." *New Political Science* 30(4): 545-563.
- Elshtain, Jean Bethke. 1987/1995. *Women and War*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.
- Enloe, Cynthia H. 1989. *Bananas, Beaches & Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*. London: Pandora Press.
- Enloe, Cynthia H. 1993. *The Morning After: Sexual Politics at the End of the Cold War*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Enloe, Cynthia H. 1996. "Margins, Silences and Bottom Rungs: How to Overcome the Underestimation of Power in the Study of International Relations." In *International Theory: Positivism and Beyond*. Steve Smith, Ken Booth and Marysia Zalewski (eds.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Enloe, Cynthia H. 2004. *The Curious Feminist : Searching for Women in a New Age of Empire*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

- Enloe, Cynthia H. 2007a "Feminism." In *International Relations Theory for the Twenty-First Century: An Introduction*. Martin Griffiths (ed.) Abingdon: Routledge.
- Enloe, Cynthia H. 2007b. *Globalization and Militarism: Feminists Make the Link*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Enloe, Cynthia H. 2007c. "Preface. Forward." *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 9(2): 183-184.
- Enloe, Cynthia. 2010. *Nimo's War, Emma's War : Making Feminist Sense of the Iraq War*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Eschle, Catherine and Bice Maiguashca. 2009. "Feminist Scholarship, Bridge-Building and Political Affinity." *International Relations* 23(1): 127-134.
- FARK. 2008. "Iranian missile photo 'shopped to cover botched test fire". Website. <http://www.fark.com/cgi/comments.pl?IDLink=3726113andviewmode=1andcpp=1> [accessed: 12 April 2010.]
- Ferguson, Kathy E. 2008. "This Species Which Is Not One: Identity Practices in Star Trek: Deep Space Nine." In *Judith Butler's Precarious Politics: Critical Encounters*. Terrell Carver and Samuel A. Chambers (eds.) London & New York: Routledge.
- French, Brian. 1969. *Principles of Collage*. London: Mills & Boon Limited.
- Finley, Susan and J. Gary Knowles. 1995. "Researcher as Artist/Artist as Researcher." *Qualitative Inquiry* 1(1): 110-142.
- Foster, Emma, Peter Kerr, Anthony Hopkins, Christopher Byrne and Linsda Ahall. 2012. "The Personal Is Not Political: At Least in the Uk's Top Politics and IR Departments." *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 15(4): 566-585.
- Gordon, Avery F. 1997/2008. *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*. Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press.
- Grayson, Kyle, Matt Davies and Simon Philpott. 2009. "Pop Goes Ir? Researching the Popular Culture-World Politics Continuum." *Politics* 29(3): 155-163.
- Guardian. 2009. "Kim Jong-il: Spot the difference." Web article April 9, 2009. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/blog/2009/apr/09/kim-jong-il-team-america> [accessed May 3, 2009]
- Guardian. 2011. "Kim Jong-il: Ten things you never knew." Web article. Dec. 19, 2011. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/shortcuts/2011/dec/19/kim-jong-il-things-never-knew> [accessed Dec. 20, 2011]
- Guardian. 2013. "Dennis Rodman back in North Korea." Sept. 3, 2013. Web article. <http://www.theguardian.com/sport/2013/sep/03/dennis-rodman-back-north-korea> [accessed Sept. 22, 2013.]
- Halberstam, J. Jack. 2012. *Gaga Feminism. Sex, Gender, and the End of Normal*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Hamilton, Caitlin, 2014. "Little Boy and Fat Man: Internet Memes, Nuclear Politics, and Kim Jong-Un". Unpublished conference paper. The 6<sup>th</sup> Oceanic Conference on International Studies, Melbourne, Australia.
- Hansen, Lene. 2000. "The Little Mermaid's Silent Security Dilemma and the Absence of Gender in the Copenhagen School." *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 29(2): 285-306.
- Harding, Sandra. 1986. *The Science Question in Feminism*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Hark, Sabine. 2007. "Magical Sign. On the Politics of Inter- and Transdisciplinarity." *Graduate Journal of Social Sciences* 4(2): 11-33.



- Hawkesworth, Mary. 2004. "The Semiotics of Premature Burial: Feminism in a Postfeminist Age." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture & Society* 29(4): 961-985.
- Hawkesworth, Mary E. 1989. "Knowers, Knowing, Known: Feminist Theory and Claims of Truth." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture & Society* 14(3): 533-557.
- Hjorth, Larissa. 2003. "Pop and Ma: The Landscape of Japanese Commodity Characters and Subjectivity." In *Mobile Cultures: New Media in Queer Asia*. Chris Berry, Fran Martin and Audrey Yue (eds.) Durham: Duke University Press pp. 158-179.
- Holmes, Douglas R. 2009. "What does monetary policy communicate?" A talk at The Finnish Institute of International Affairs, Helsinki, Finland. June 8, 2009.
- Homanen, Riikka. 2013. *Doing Pregnancy, the Unborn, and the Maternity Healthcare Institution*. Acta Universitatis Tamperensis. Tampere: Tampere University Press.
- hooks, bell. 2000. *Feminism Is for Everybody: Passionate Politics*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press.
- Hooper, Charlotte. 1998. "Masculinist Practices and Gender Politics: The Operation of Multiple Masculinities in International Relations." In *The "Man" Question in International Relations*. Marysia Zalewski and Jane Parpart (eds.) Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Hooper, Charlotte. 2001. *Manly States : Masculinities, International Relations, and Gender Politics*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Huffington Post. 2013. "North Korean Hairstyles: Pyongyang Salons Display Menus Of State Sanctioned Trims (PICTURES)." Web article Feb. 21, 2013 [updated March 1, 2013] [http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2013/02/21/north-korean-hairstyles-pyongyang-salons-menus-state-sanctioned-crops-pictures\\_n\\_2733715.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2013/02/21/north-korean-hairstyles-pyongyang-salons-menus-state-sanctioned-crops-pictures_n_2733715.html) [accessed March 3, 2013]
- Hustvedt, Siri. 2007. *What I loved*. Spectre.
- ICAN. 2012. "Catastrophic Humanitarian Harm." Publication of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons. <http://www.icanw.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/catastrophicharm2012.pdf> [accessed January 7, 2013.]
- Ingersoll, Geoffrey. 2013. "Kim Jong Un Is Having A Tough Time Finding Virgins." Web article Aug 19, 2013. <http://www.businessinsider.com/kim-jong-un-cant-find-virgins-2013-8> [accessed Sept. 6, 2013]
- Kangas, Anni. 2009. "From Interfaces to Interpretants: A Pragmatist Exploration into Popular Culture as International Relations." *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 38(2): 317-343.
- Kennedy, Denis. 2012. "Codified Compassion: Politics and Principles in Humanitarian Action." Ph.D. dissertation. University of Minnesota.
- Khanam, R. 2005. *Encyclopaedic Ethnography Of Middle-East And Central Asia*. New Delhi: Dr. N.K. Singh for Global Vision Publishing House.
- Kiersey, Nicholas J. and Iver B. Neumann (eds.) 2013. *Battlestar Galactica and International Relations*. Popular Culture and World Politics series. Routledge.
- Kinsella, Helen. 2003. "For a Careful Reading: The Conservatism of Gender Constructivism." Gender and International Relations Forum edited by Terrell Carver. *International Studies Review* 5(2): 287-302.
- Kitch, Sally L. 2007. "Feminist Interdisciplinarity: Approaches to Knowledge Building." In *Handbook of Feminist Research: Theory and Praxis*. Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber (ed.) Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

- Klabbers, Jan. 2009. "The Bridge Crack'd: A Critical Look at Interdisciplinary Relations." *International Relations* 23(1): 119-125.
- Kotilainen, Noora. 2011. "Humanitarian Soldiers, Colonialised Others and Invisible Enemies -Visual strategic communication narratives of the Afghan War." The Finnish Institute of International Affairs. Working Paper 72, available at: <http://www.fiia.fi/en/publication/204/>
- Kronsell, Annica. 2006. "Methods for Studying Silences: Gender Analysis in Institutions of Hegemonic Masculinity." In *Feminist Methodologies for International Relations*. Brooke A. Ackerly, Maria Stern and Jacqui True (eds.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kuo, Maggie and Charlie Storrar. 2013. "Capita list: North Korea approves 28 model socialist hairstyles." Web article Feb. 23, 2013. <http://www.wantchinatimes.com/news-subclass-cnt.aspx?cid=1103&MainCatID=11&id=20130223000071> [accessed March 3, 2013]
- Kurki, Milja and Anna Stavrianakis. 2009. "Introduction (to Rountable: The Limits of Bridge Building)." *International Relations* 23(1): 117-118.
- Kurvinen, Juha. 2013. Facebook post May 31, 2013 <https://www.facebook.com/juha.kurvinen> [accessed: Nov. 6, 2013.]
- Kuusipalo, Jaana. 2011. *Sukupuolittunut poliittinen edustus Suomessa* [Gendered Political Representation in Finland]. Tampere: Tampere University Press.
- Kynsilehto, Anitta. 2011. *The Politics of Multivocality - Encountering Maghrebi Women in France*. Tampere: Tampere University Press.
- Käpylä, Juha and Denis Kennedy. 2014. "Cruel to Care? Investigating the Governance of Compassion in the Humanitarian Imaginary." *International Theory* 6(2): 255-292.
- Lake, David. 2013. "Gender bias in professional networks and citations." Blog post. Oct. 4, 2013. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2013/10/04/gender-bias-in-professional-networks-and-citations/> [accessed Oct. 18, 2013]
- LGF [Little Green Footballs]. 2008. "Iran's photoshopped missile" Website. [http://littlegreenfootballs.com/article/30597\\_Irans\\_Photoshopped\\_Missile\\_Launch](http://littlegreenfootballs.com/article/30597_Irans_Photoshopped_Missile_Launch) [accessed: 14 April 2010.]
- Liinason, Mia and Iris van der Tuin. 2007. "Practising Feminist Interdisciplinarity - Editorial". *Graduate Journal of Social Science* 4(2): 1-10.
- Lim, Alvin Cheng-Hin. 2013. *Cambodia and the Politics of Aesthetics*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Ling, L. H. M. 2002. *Postcolonial International Relations. Conquest and Desire between Asia and the West*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Lloyd, Genevieve. 1984. *The Man of Reason: 'Male' and 'Female' in Western Philosophy*. Routledge.
- Loe, Meika. 2001. "Fixing Broken Masculinity: Viagra as a Technology for the Production of Gender and Sexuality." *Sexuality & Culture* 5(3): 97-125.
- Long, David. 2011. "Interdisciplinarity and the Study of International Relations." In *Global and Regional Problems: Towards an Interdisciplinary Study*. Pami Aalto, Vilho Harle and Sami Moisio (eds.) Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Luoma-aho, Mika. 2009. "Political Theology, Anthropomorphism, and Person-Hood of the State: The Religion of IR." *International Political Sociology* 3(3): 239-309.
- Maliniak, Daniel, Ryan M. Powers, and Barbara F. 2013. "The Gender Citation Gap." APSA 2013 Annual Meeting Paper. Available at SSRN: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=2303311>
- Mandaville, Peter. 2011. "Cosmography Recapitulates Biography: An Epilogue." In *Autobiographical International Relations - I, IR*. Naeem Inayatullah (ed.). Routledge.

- Maruska, Jennifer Heeg 2009. "When Are States Hypermasculine?" In *Gender and International Security: Feminist Perspectives*. Laura Sjoberg Ed. London & New York, Routledge pp.235-255.
- Masters, Cristina. 2003. "Tales of the Shield: A Feminist Reading of Ballistic Missile Defence." *YCISS Working Papers* (23).
- McRobbie, Angela. 2004. "Post-feminism and Popular Culture." *Feminist Media Studies* 4(3): 255-264.
- Mendible, Myra. 2005. "Dominance and Submission in Postmodern War Imagery." *Peace Review: A Journal of Social Justice* 17(1): 55-63.
- Miettinen, Mervi. 2013. *Truth, Justice, and the American Way? The Popular Geopolitics of American Identity in Contemporary Superhero Comics*. Tampere: Tampere University Press.
- Myrntinen, Henri. 2013. "Phantom Menaces: The Politics of Rumour, Securitisation and Masculine Identities in the Shadows of the Ninjas." *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology* 14(5):471-485.
- Nayak, Meghana. 2006. "Orientalism and 'Saving' Us State Identity after 9/11." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 8(1): 42-61.
- Nexon, Daniel. 2013. "The Citation Gap: Results of a Self-Experiment." Blog post. Aug. 16, 2013. <http://www.whiteoliphaunt.com/duckofminerva/2013/08/the-citation-gap-results-of-a-self-experiment.html> [accessed Aug. 16, 2013]
- Nizza, Mike (2008) "Photoshop Frenzy on Iran Missile Tests". Website. The Lede - The New York Times News Blog. July 11, 2008; 11:12AM. <http://thelede.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/07/11/photoshop-frenzy-on-iran-missile-tests/> [accessed April 14, 2010.]
- NK News. 2011. "Select your Hairstyle!" Web article Oct. 30, 2011. <http://www.nknews.org/2011/10/select-your-hairstyle/> [accessed March 3, 2013]
- O'Neill, Edward. 2002. "How to Become a Camp Icon in Five Easy Lessons: Fetishism—and Tallulah Bankhead's Phallus." In *Hop on Pop: The Politics and Pleasures of Popular Culture*. Jenkins, Henry, Tara McPherson, and Jane Shattuc (eds.) Duke University Press.
- Osterworld, Tilman. 1991. *Pop Art*. Köln: Benedikt Taschen.
- Pakkasvirta, Jussi and Heikki Mikkeli. 2007. *Tieteiden välissä? Johdatus monitieteisyyteen, tieteidenvälisyyteen ja poikkitieteisyyteen*. [In between disciplines? An introduction to multidisciplinary, interdisciplinarity, and transdisciplinarity] Helsinki: WSOY.
- Penttinen, Elina. 2013. *Joy and International Relations: A New Methodology*. War, Politics and Experience series. Routledge.
- Peterson, V. Spike. 2009. "Interactive and Intersectional Analytics of Globalization." *Frontiers - A Journal of Women's Studies* 30(1): 34-65.
- Peterson, V. Spike. 2010. "Gendered Identities, Ideologies, and Practices in the Context of War and Militarism." In *Gender, War, and Militarism: Feminist Perspectives*. Laura Sjoberg and Sandra Via (eds.) Greenwood Publishing Group pp. 17-29.
- Peterson, V. Spike. 2011. "Femininity: Culture, Ideology and Political Economy." In *Feminism and International Relations: Conversations About the Past, Present and Future*. J. Ann Tickner and Laura Sjoberg (eds.) Abingdon: Routledge pp. 212-220.
- Peterson, Spike V. and Anne Sisson Runyan. 1993. *Global Gender Issues*. Westview Press.
- Pickover, Clifford A. 2001. *Wonders of Numbers: Adventures in Mathematics, Mind, and Meaning*. Oxford University Press.

- Puumala, Eeva. 2012. *Corporeal Conjunctures No-W-Here: Failed Asylum Seekers and the Senses of the International*. Tampere: Tampere University Press.
- Reid, Julian. 2009. "Politicizing Connectivity: Beyond the Biopolitics of Information Technology in International Relations." *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*. 22(4): 607-623.
- Review of International Studies. 2004. Forum. 3(2): 255-316.
- Rose, Gillian. 2007. *Visual Methodologies. An Introduction to the Interpretation of Visual Materials*. London: Sage Publications.
- Rubin, Rita. 2008. "Why is this man smiling? It's not Viagra." Web article. <http://www.usatoday.com/news/health/drugs/2002-04-18-enzyte.htm> [accessed: 28 August 2009.]
- Ruskola, Teemu. 2010. "Raping Like a State." *UCLA Law Review* 57(5): 1477-1536.
- Sandberg, Sheryl. 2013. *Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead*. Knopf.
- Schielke, Samuli. 2011. Lecture on the revolution in Egypt at University of Tampere.
- Scott, Joan W. 1986. "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis." *The American Historical Review* 91(5): 1053-1075.
- Shachtman, Noah. 2008. "Attack of the Photoshopped Missiles (Updated)." Website. July 11, 2008; 11:15AM. Wired - Danger Room. <http://www.wired.com/dangerroom/2008/07/attack-of-the-p/> [accessed August 25, 2009.]
- Shapiro, Michael J. 2009. *Cinematic Geopolitics*. Global Horizons series. London: Routledge.
- Shapiro, Michael J. 2012. *Studies in Trans-Disciplinary Method: After the Aesthetic Turn*. Interventions series. Routledge.
- Shapiro, Michael J. 2013. Seminar and lecture in Helsinki. May 21-22, 2013.
- Shepherd, Laura J. 2007. "Victims, Perpetrators and Actors' Revisited: Exploring the Potential for a Feminist Reconceptualisation of (International) Security and (Gender) Violence." *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 9(2): 239-256.
- Shepherd, Laura J. 2008. *Gender, Violence and Security: Discourse as Practice*. London & New York: Zed Books.
- Shepherd, Laura J. 2013. "Introduction: Critical Approaches to Security in Contemporary Global Politics." In *Critical Approaches to Security: An Introduction to Theories and Methods*. Laura J. Shepherd (ed.) London: Routledge.
- Schouten, Peer. 2009. "Theory Talk #36: Michael J. Shapiro on Pictures, Paintings, Power and the Political Philosophy of International Relations." *Theory Talks*, <http://www.theory-talks.org/2010/02/theory-talk-36.html> (01-02-2010)
- Shim, David. 2014. *Visual Politics and North Korea: Seeing is Believing*. Routledge.
- Shim, David and Dirk Nabers. 2013. "Imaging North Korea: Exploring its Visual Representations in International Politics." *International Studies Perspectives* 14(3): 289-306.
- Sjoberg, Laura. 2006. *Gender, Justice, and the Wars in Iraq a Feminist Reformulation of Just War Theory*. Lanham: Lexington Books.
- Sjoberg, Laura. 2009a. "Feminist Interrogations of Terrorism/Terrorism Studies." *International Relations* 23(1): 69-74.
- Sjoberg, Laura. 2009b. Introduction. In *Gender and International Security: Feminist Perspectives*. Laura Sjoberg (ed.) London & New York: Routledge.
- Sjoberg, Laura and J. Ann Tickner. 2011. Introduction: International Relation through Feminist Lenses. In *Feminism and International Relations: Conversations About the Past*,



- Present and Future*. J. Ann Tickner and Laura Sjoberg (eds.) Abingdon: Routledge pp. 1-21.
- Sjoberg, Laura and Sandra Via. 2010. Introduction. In *Gender, War, and Militarism: Feminist Perspectives*. Laura Sjoberg and Sandra Via (eds.) Greenwood Publishing Group: 1-13.
- Slaughter, Anne-Marie. 2012. "Why Women Still Can't Have It All". Web article. <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2012/07/why-women-still-cant-have-it-all/309020/> [accessed July 12, 2013]
- Sontag, Susan. 1961/2009. *Against Interpretation and Other Essays*. London: Penguin Classics.
- Sontag, Susan. 1979. *On Photography*. London: Penguin Books.
- Sontag, Susan. 2004. *Regarding the Pain of Others*. London: Penguin Books.
- Soreanu, Raluca. 2010. "Feminist Creativities and the Disciplinary Imaginary of International Relations." *International Political Sociology* 4(4): 380-400.
- Soreanu, Raluca and David Hudson. 2008. "Feminist Scholarship in International Relations and the Politics of Disciplinary Emotion." *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 37(1): 123-151.
- Squires, Judith and Jutta Weldes. 2007. "Beyond Being Marginal: Gender and International Relations in Britain." *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 9(2): 185-203.
- Stanley, Tim. 2013. "North Korea issues a list of 28 approved 'socialist' hairstyles. It seems tyrants hate long hair." Web article Feb. 25, 2013. <http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/timstanley/100204133/north-korea-issues-a-list-of-28-approved-socialist-hairstyles-it-seems-tyrants-hate-long-hair/> [accessed March 3, 2013]
- Stern, Maria and Marysia Zalewski. 2009. "Feminist Fatigue(s): Reflections on Feminism and Familiar Fables of Militarisation." *Review of International Studies* 35(3): 611-630.
- Schwartz, Pepper and Virginia Rutter. 1998. *The Gender of Sexuality*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.
- Sylvester, Christine. 1994. *Feminist Theory and International Relations in a Postmodern Era*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sylvester, Christine. 2002. *Feminist International Relations an Unfinished Journey*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sylvester, Christine. 2004. "Woe or Whoa! International Relations Where It's Not Supposed to Be." *The Brown Journal of World Affairs* X(2): 57-68.
- Sylvester, Christine. 2007a. "Whither the International at the End of Ir." *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 35(3): 551-573.
- Sylvester, Christine. 2007b. "Anatomy of a Footnote." *Security Dialogue* 38(4): 547-558.
- Sylvester, Christine. 2009. *Art/Museums: International Relations Where We Least Expect It*. Boulder, Paradigm Publishers.
- Sylvester, Christine (ed.) 2011. "The Forum: Emotion and the Feminist IR Researcher." *International Studies Review* 13(4): 687-708.
- Sylvester, Christine. 2013. "Experiencing the end and afterlives of International Relations/theory." *European Journal of International Relations* 19(3): 609-626.
- Taylor, Mark P. 1992. *Disfiguring: Art, Architecture, Religion*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Tickner, J. Ann. 1988. "Hans Morgenthau's Principles of Political Realism: A Feminist Reformulation." *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 17(3): 429-440.
- Tickner, J. Ann. 1992. *Gender in International Relations Feminist Perspectives on Achieving Global Security*. New York: Columbia University Press.



- Tickner, J. Ann. 1997. "You Just Don't Understand: Troubled Engagements between Feminists and IR Theorists." *International Studies Quarterly* 41: 611-632.
- Tickner, J. Ann. 2001. *Gendering World Politics Issues and Approaches in the Post-Cold War Era*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- True, Jacqui. 2005. Feminism. In *Theories of International Relations*. Scott Burchill, and Andrew Linklater, Richard Devetak, Jack Donnelly, Matthew Paterson, Christian Reus-Smit and Jacqui True (eds.) Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Vogt, Henri. 2008. "On the State of the IR Art: Problems of Self-Positioning and the Absence of Freedom." *Cooperation and Conflict* 43(4): 363-372.
- Wadley, Jonathan D. 2009. Gendering the State: Performativity and Protection in International Security. In *Gender and International Security: Feminist Perspectives*. Laura Sjoberg (ed.) London & New York: Routledge. 38-58.
- Walker, Peter. 2013. "Dennis Rodman gives away name of Kim Jong-un's daughter" Sept. 9, 2013. Web article. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/sep/09/dennis-rodman-north-korea-baby-name> [accessed Sept. 22, 2013]
- Washington Post (WP). 2006. "Hitting Kim Jong Il Right in the Cognac." Web article. Nov. 30, 2006. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/11/29/AR2006112900388.html> [accessed Oct. 2, 2013]
- Weber, Cynthia. 1999. *Faking It. U.S. Hegemony in a "Post-Phallic" Era*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Weber, Sandra. 2008. Visual Images in Research. In *Handbook of the Arts in Qualitative Research: Perspectives, Methodologies, Examples, and Issues*. J. Gary Knowles and Ardra L. Cole Eds. Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage Publications pp. 41-53.
- Weldes, Jutta. 2003. "Popular Culture, Science Fiction, and World Politics: Exploring Intertextual Relations." In *To Seek Out New Worlds: Science Fiction and World Politics*. Jutta Weldes (ed.) Palgrave Macmillan pp. 1-27.
- Weldes, Jutta. 2006. "High Politics and Low Data: Globalization Discourses and Popular Culture." In *Interpretation and Method: Empirical Research Methods and Interpretative Turn*. Yanow, Dora (ed.) Armonk, NY: Sharpe, Inc. pp. 176-186.
- Whiteley, Gillian. 2010. *Junk: Art and the Politics of Trash*. London: I.B.Tauris
- Wibben, Annick T.R. 2004. "Feminist International Relations: Old Debates and New Directions." *The Brown Journal of World Affairs* X(2): 97-114.
- Wibben, Annick T.R. 2011. *Feminist Security Studies: A Narrative Approach*. PRIO New Security Studies series. Routledge.
- Wilcox, Lauren. 2009. "Gendering the Cult of the Offensive." In *Gender and International Security*. Laura Sjoberg (ed.) New York: Routledge. 61-82.
- Wilcox, Lauren. 2013. "Symposium — Response to Christine Sylvester, 'Experiencing the End of IR Theory/End of War'". Blog guest post. Sept. 15, 2013. <http://www.whiteoliphaunt.com/duckofminerva/2013/09/symposium-response-to-christine-sylvester-experiencing-the-end-of-ir-theoryend-of-war.html> [Accessed Oct. 14, 2013]
- Wilmes, Ulrich. 2013. "Reading pictures" in *Ellen Gallagher: AxME*. London: Tate Publishing.
- Yle Areena. 2013. "Suomalaisjonglööri sai pohjoiskorealaiset nauramaan." [Finnish juggler made North Korean laugh.] Television interview. Available at: <http://areena.yle.fi/tv/1863692> [Retrieved Nov. 6, 2013]

- Young, Iris Marion. 2003. "The Logic of Masculinist Protection: Reflections on the Current Security State." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture & Society* 29(1): 1-25.
- Youngs, Gillian. 2004. "Feminist International Relations: A Contradiction in Terms? Or: Why Women and Gender Are Essential to Understanding the World 'We' Live In." *International Affairs* 80(1): 75-87.
- Yrjölä, Riina. 2014. *The Global Politics of Celebrity Humanitarianism*. Doctoral dissertation, University of Jyväskylä. Available at: <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-951-39-5691-2>
- Yrjölä, Riina and Jemima Repo. 2011. "The Gender Politics of Celebrity Humanitarianism in Africa." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 13 (1): 44-62.
- Zalewski, Marysia. 1995. "'Well, What Is the Feminist Perspective on Bosnia?'" *Foreign Affairs* 71(2): 339-356.
- Zalewski, Marysia. 1996. 'All These Theories yet the Bodies Keep Piling Up': Theory, Theorists, Theorising. In *International Theory: Positivism and Beyond*. Steve Smith, Ken Booth and Marysia Zalewski (eds.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Zalewski, Marysia. 2003. "'Women's Troubles' Again" Gender and International Relations Forum edited by Terrell Carver. *International Studies Review* 5(2): 287-302.
- Zalewski, Marysia. 2006. Distracted Reflections on the Production, Narration, and Refusal of Feminist Knowledge in International Relations. In *Feminist Methodologies for International Relations*. Brooke A. Ackerly, Maria Stern and Jacqui True (eds.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press pp. 42-61.
- Zalewski, Marysia. 2007. "Do We Understand Each Other Yet? Troubling Feminist Encounters with(in) International Relations." *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 9(2): 302-312.
- Zalewski, Marysia. 2013. *Feminist International Relations. Exquisite Corpse*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Zalewski, Marysia and Jane L. Parpart, Eds. 2008. *Re-Thinking the Man Question: Sex, Gender, Violence in International Relations*. London & New York: Zed Books.
- Zalewski, Marysia, J. Ann Tickner, Christine Sylvester, Margot Light, Vivienne Jabri, Kimberly Hutchings and Fred Halliday. 2008. "Roundtable Discussion: Reflections on the Past, Present, and Future in Gender and International Relations." *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 37(1): 153-179.