
Dari E. Sylvester, University of the Pacific
Michaele Ferguson, Lori Jo Marso, and their contributors present essays probing the extent to which President George W. Bush promoted policies supportive of women as he pursued his “W Stands for Women” campaigns in 2000 and 2004. The book’s contributors focus on Bush’s rhetoric pertaining to AIDS policy, Abu Ghraib, the War on Terror, interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan, and homeland security. The editors frame the book’s contribution with the unifying perspective that, despite the rhetoric, President Bush’s administration and campaigns not only fall short of promoting women’s rights but, in many cases, undercut those efforts. Indeed, the claim that the administration’s pro-feminist oratory is a form of “stealth misogyny” comes several years after some robust feminists have razed Bush for his rhetoric on these grounds (see, for example, W Effect: Bush’s War on Women ed. Laura Flanders, 2004). Similarly, in Bushwomen: Tales of a Cynical Species (2004), Laura Flanders presents comparable arguments about how Bush trots out female leaders wrapped in the garb of feminist inclusiveness to distract people from seeing his real record on environmental, health, and labor issues.

W Stands for Women differentiates itself by bringing distinctively academic perspectives and discourse to the subject matter. It makes contributions to the field of gender and politics by presenting essays with a range of theoretical approaches. For instance, Marso questions the administration’s approach to interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq by using illustrative snippets of a play by Tony Kushner and a selection of...
female responses to the interventions. Theorists such as Iris Marion Young and Karen Zivi explore the implications of the administration’s rhetoric by employing theoretical constructs developed from Hobbes and Rousseau, respectively. R. Claire Snyder explores the rhetoric of certain conservative Christian groups and organizations she classifies as “neoconservative” to develop an argument that traditional notions of family that are lauded by these groups undermine further progress by feminists. Authors such as David S. Gutterman, Danielle Regan, and Timothy Kaufman-Osbourne draw on pop culture references to exemplify ways in which “Bush’s Masculinities” may fall short of their hyper-macho promises. Overall, this volume of essays presents a diversity of ways to assess the impact of rhetoric that, on its face, appears solidly feminist, yet may fail to result in the types of outcomes that feminists would hope for.

My main concern with the book is its relative lack of systematic, empirical analysis. Although many of the essays are provocative and creative in their approaches, all except one not only fail to describe their methodology in detail but also fail to define critical terms that are central to their analysis. This, unfortunately, leaves the reader with many questions about the internal and external validity of their findings. For example, Snyder’s argument that the “patriarchal family undermines rather than undergirds democracy” (p. 18) would have been even more powerful if she had clearly defined terms like “democracy,” “gendered, hetero-normative family,” and “neoconservative” at the outset, and had she cited evidence from organizations that were picked systematically, not selectively. For her analysis, she relies on selected quotations from three organizations: the Promise Keepers, Concerned Women for America, and the Family Research Council. However, she does not provide any analysis of the extent to which these organizations are representative of all neoconservative or “Christian right” groups. Likewise, Gutterman and Regan present interesting examples of photographs and campaign language that suggest the administration’s adeptness at creating a highly masculine mystique. Nevertheless, their approach is nonsystematic, with no mention of their methodology in selecting those particular pictures or speeches to analyze.

The exception, an essay by Ferguson, indicates that her methodology is based on a review of “speeches and other texts that concentrate on women’s issues or that announced new policies or initiatives regarding women” (p. 198) and selection of opinion editorials and documents posted on the White House Web site.
In conclusion, *W Stands for Women* provides a critical look at the Bush administration’s rhetoric and record on issues of import to women. It provides a number of theoretical approaches to understanding the development of President Bush’s pro-feminist language. Those interested in feminist theory, particularly faculty and graduate students, would find compelling arguments therein, but scholars interested in systematic analysis of Bush’s rhetoric would likely be disappointed, as would individuals unfamiliar with the vernacular of feminist theory.


doi:10.1017/S1743923X08000433

Christina Rowley
University of Bristol

Cynthia Enloe’s latest book is one in a series, edited by Terrell Carver and Manfred Steger, which aims to “present globalization as a multidimensional process constituted by complex, often contradictory interactions of global, regional, and local aspects of social life” (p. ii). The series includes other volumes that explore the connections between globalization and war, terrorism, feminist activism, labor, culture, health and the environment, U.S. popular culture, law, and international political economy. *Globalization and Militarism* is aimed in particular at those who have little prior knowledge of feminist approaches and who may be a priori skeptical of their value in explaining processes of world politics. The book has many features to recommend it. Enloe’s straightforward prose and matter-of-fact tone are complemented by the pared-down format of the text: there are no footnotes or endnotes (and fewer Harvard citations than one might expect, possibly because she draws upon her personal interactions with feminists at least as often as she does their writings, but also because one of the aims of the series is to be accessible and “reader friendly”).

It is gratifying to see these concepts (globalization and militarism) discussed in a general introductory text from an explicitly feminist