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**Only a few weeks ago Rebecca Meredith and her partner competed against six other teams in the final round of the Glasgow University Union. Unlike those six other teams, the two women were booed, sexualized and demoralized by debaters, judges and audience members. The events at Glasgow are not isolated – in fact female competitors from across the world have begun sharing their particular experiences with sexism in debate. The dominance of male privilege and sexism in public arenas are an important starting point. As middle and upper-class white women, Erica and I earn plenty of privileges due to our racial identity – attending a private school, financial benefits to travel for debate, and the neutral assumption that my words are more credible than a person of color. *But* with these unearned privileges, Erica and I are *also* confronted with a male dominated world that sexualizes, demonizes and shames women. What is seen as a white privilege to be protected by white men only reinforces women as the victim**

**Meredith 3/6/13 –** Rebecca Meredith 3rd year politics and international relations student at King’s College Cambridge, the-f-word blog, "*What does a woman know, anyway?": sexism in debating*, http://www.thefword.org.uk/blog/2013/03/what\_does\_a\_wom

This is a guest post by Rebecca Meredith. Rebecca is a 3rd year politics and international relations student at King's College Cambridge. She was ranked the 3rd best debater in Europe at the European University Debating Championships 2012, and was part of the 4th top team in the world at the World University Debating Championships 2013.¶ In the past three days **I have received hundreds of emails, from the Philippines, from South Africa, from America and the UK, saying: "I am a young, intelligent woman who debates, and I have been a victim of misogyny."¶** I have been debating since I was 14. At school it was a hobby, good for the CV; at university it allowed me to travel the world; and on Saturday it thrust me into one of the most unpleasant incidents of my life. **A friend and I opened the final of the Glasgow University Union (GUU) Ancients debating competition.** Like the other six individuals in that final, we had won enough of five rounds of debates to reach it. Unlike them, **we were booed, heckled with "Shame, woman" and exposed to sexual comments about our appearance. This was unrelated to the content of our speeches. None of the others faced this. The difference between us? We are female and they are male.¶** During the debate, **some male students, including former GUU committee members and an ex-president, asked "What qualifications does a woman possibly have to be here?" "What does a woman know, anyway?"** Afterward, one shouted "**Get that woman out of my chamber**!" as my debating partner passed.¶ **A female student who objected was told not to be a "frigid bitch**". Another challenged perpetrators afterward: **tournament organisers and GUU committee members begged her not to "cause trouble".** Confronting one heckler and the committee, **I was told that this behaviour was "to be expected", "par for the course". I asked whether they would accept similar treatment of racial minority speakers. "They would be booed too, but we don't have them here." The committee accepted we were booed because we were women, but refused to take action.¶** The **GUU has been accused of misogyny before**. Some members hold an annual celebratory dinner in honour of men who voted against admitting women in the 1980s. At a Union pub quiz I heard the question, **"How many men voted against letting women into the GUU?" met with a torrent of applause from male students**.¶ There are lovely people at GUU. Some individuals apologised personally. **But students there told us that the men concerned often shouted "whore" and "slut" at female students. A former committee member stated that she had "battered wife syndrome", reaching the top by accepting and ignoring misogyny. One said, "Things will never change here, they are too powerful."¶** I don't mind if crowds heckle or express disapproval of my arguments. But I refuse to accept that by virtue of being a woman, I should be abused in a way men are not. **Women should not have to accept being overtly sexualised or targeted as "par for the course" in a university which is supposed to represent learning and equality.¶ This incident is not isolated**. We aren't complaining for fun. Many from Glasgow University report abandoning debating as a fresher because of misogyny. **One heard committee members singing about rape. Debaters across the world share similar stories. One was told to wear a shorter skirt to win debates; others were told that male speakers sound "persuasive", but women's voices sound hysterical. I myself have been told to defer to my male partner since "men are more convincing**".¶ **I created an online survey for debaters worldwide to anonymously report misogyny. Within six hours, we had over 150 reports of women facing sexual harassment, derogatory comments and abuse.** We will compile a report with ideas for practical change within debating to combat misogyny. To be clear, debating is usually friendly and inclusive; many world-class university speakers are women. **But some unions still face institutional sexism, where women must accept sexism to stay involved and gender-based abuse is normalised.¶ The national media has invented details without speaking to us. One daily tabloid claimed we were reduced to tears in the chamber, another that we were upset because the boys called us ugly.** **None of this is accurate.** **Our attempt to create change has morphed into a story about two stereotypically weak women who cried when boys were mean to them.** Commenters attacked us as "wrapped in cotton wool" and "clearly not good enough debaters to deal with it**". But debating shouldn't involve shouting over sexist abuse from men who believe your gender makes you an inherently inferior speaker.** It's not an equal art if men have a free platform to speak and are judged on argument, while women are sexualised, abused and judged on gender.¶ Responses from social media shocked me: **my Facebook profile was shared by male GUU members, while university social websites placed pictures of me, taken from the internet, in their "hotties" section.¶** Several Glasgow student societies have disaffiliated from the GUU. The Cambridge Union has promised not to send debaters there until sexism is dealt with. A petition to hold the members to account was set up by a Glasgow student, receiving over 3,000 signatures. In response, the GUU has promised to look into the incident and work on its pervasive culture of misogyny. I hope they do. They owe it to **many** bright young **women** who **contacted me to say they left debating because of treatment they faced** there. Above all, I hope that the hobby I enjoy learns that **GUU is not isolated**, but that **latent misogyny which says that the male rhetorician is inherently more persuasive, or that girls must only win debates because of who they have sex with, must be tackled.¶** Women debate and deal with hecklers just as well as men. But we shouldn't have to ignore sexism to get ahead. **We shouldn't be booed for our gender or see ourselves turned into crying damsels when we speak out**. Please argue with me; leave comments challenging me; but do not refuse to listen simply because I am a woman.¶ Image shows a wooden carving over the door of a debating chamber, with the words "DEBATING CHAMBER". Shared courtesy of [Gavin Reynolds](http://www.flickr.com/photos/gsreynolds/) under a Creative Commons licence.

#### The outcome of this blatant sexism is women’s under-representation in policy debate. Female debaters experience sexism in and outside of the debate round that result in gender-related barriers. Women are not only sexualized and victimized but their particular ways of knowing are excluded from the debate community. Female visibility is key to success in the business and academic world as well as fostering role models for other younger female debaters.

**Griffin and Raider, 89**(J. Cinder and Holly Jane, “Women in High School Debate” [http://groups.wfu.edu/debate/MiscSites/DRGArticles/Griffin&Raider1989PunishmentPar.htm](http://groups.wfu.edu/debate/MiscSites/DRGArticles/Griffin%26Raider1989PunishmentPar.htm))

'I don't usually vote for girl debaters because debate really is a boy's activity. I am surprised by your ability to handle these issues.' This is virtually a verbatim quote received by one of the authors on a ballot during her senior year in high school. A woman wrote the ballot. In recent years there has been some effort to isolate the factors that limit the participation of women in collegiate debate.2 These studies are superfluous if the factors regarding participation of females at the high school level are not understood. Unfortunately, no such formal research attempt has been made to explain the reasons underlying the thoughts that contribute to the opening quote. The issue of participation of other minority groups in debate is a topic beyond the scope of our discussion. The virtual non-existence of minorities is a deeply disturbing issue and deserves further investigation. Understanding gender and minority selection of debate as an activity in high school level is useful in explaining those selection factors at the collegiate level. One finds few college debaters who were not exposed to the activity in high school. Furthermore, it is unlikely that a female who has not experienced some competition and success in the activity while in high school will remain, very much less begin, debating in college. Additionally, **given its competitive nature**, quest for excellence, **and skewed gender composition, debate offers a micro-model of the business and academic worlds. There are implications for female representation** and treatment in these societal roles as **debaters tend to become leaders in** both **the business and academic worlds**. As the **perceptions of women ingrained through debate** experience **are translated into society** at large **through leadership positions, the implications for under-representation of women in debate takes on greater significance**. This article addresses several of the reasons behind female participation rates at the high school level and offers a few solutions to the problem. All things being equal, one would assume roughly equal numbers of male and female participants in high school debate. Debate, unlike athletics, does not require physical skills which might restrict the participation of women. Additionally, debate is academically oriented and women tend to select extracurricular activities , that are more academic in nature than men.3 Based on these assumptions, one would expect proportional representation of the genders in the activity. Why then, are there four times more men in debate than women?4 Several explanations exist that begin to account for the low rate of female participation in debate. Fewer females enter the activity at the outset. Although organizational and procedural tactics used in high school debate may account for low initial rates of participation, **a variety of social and structural phenomena**, not necessarily caused by the debate community also **account for these rates**. Ultimately, **the disproportionate attrition rate of female debaters results in the male dominated composition** of the activity. **There are more disincentives for women to participate** in debate than for men. While entry rates for women and man may in some cases be roughly equal, the total number of women who participate for four years is significantly lower than the corresponding number of men. This rate of attrition is due to factors that can be explained largely by an examination of the debate community itself. Socially inculcated values contribute to low rates of female entry in high school debate. Gender bias and its relation to debate has been studied by Manchester and Freidly. They conclude, **"[m]ales are adhering to sex-role stereotypes** and sex-role expectations **when they participate in debate because it is perceived as a masculine' activity. Female debate participants experience** more **gender-related barriers** **because they are not adhering to sex-role stereotypes and sex-role expectations**.5 In short, '**nice girls' do not compete** against or **with men, are not assertive, and are not expected to engage in policy discourse**, particularly relating to military issues. Rather, "nice **girls" should be cheerleaders, join** foreign language **clubs, or** perhaps participate in **student government**. It should be noted that **many of these attitudes are indoctrinated at birth** and cannot be directly attributed to the debate community. However, **there are many activity specific elements** **that discourage female participation** in high school debate. Structural barriers endemic to the forensics community dissuade female ninth graders from entering the activity.6 Recruitment procedures and initial exposure may unintentionally create a first impression of the activity as dominated by men. By and large, it is a male debater or a male debate coach that will discuss the activity with new students for the first time. Additionally, **most debate coaches are men. This reinforces a socially proven norm to prospective debaters**, that debate is an activity controlled by men. **This male exposure contributes to a second barrier** to participation. **Parents are more likely to let a son go on an overnight than they are a daughter, particularly when the coach is male and the squad is mostly male. This may be a concern even when the coach is a trusted member of the community.** While entry barriers are formidable, female attrition rates effect the number of women in the activity most significantly.7 Rates of attrition are largely related to the level of success. Given the time and money commitment involved in debate, if one is not winning one quits debating. The problem is isolating the factors that contribute to the early failure of women debaters. **Even if equal numbers of males and females enter** at the novice level, **the female** perception of debate as a whole is not based on the gender proportions of her immediate peer group. Rather, she **looks to the composition of debaters across divisions**. This may be easily understood if one considers the traditional structures of novice debate. Often it is **the varsity debate team, composed mostly of males**, who coach and judge novice. **Novices** also **learn** how to debate **by watching debates. Thus, the role models will be those** individuals **already involved in the activity** and entrenched in its values. **The importance of female role models** and mentors **should not be underestimated.** There is a proven correlation between the number of female participants and the number of female coaches and judges.8 The presence of female mentors and role models may not only help attract women to the activity, but will significantly temper the attrition rate of female debaters. Novice, female debaters have few role models and, consequently, are more likely to drop out than their male counterparts; resulting in an unending cycle of female attrition in high school debate. Pragmatically, there are certain cost benefit criteria that coaches on the high school level, given the constraints of a budget, must consider. Coaches with teams dominated by males may be reluctant to recruit females due to traveling and housing considerations. Thus, even if a female decides to join the team, her travel opportunities may be more limited than those of the males on the team. Once a female has "proven" herself, the willingness to expend team resources on her increases, assuming she overcomes the initial obstacles.

#### The debate community places women in a double-bind – they are continually degraded, judged and excluded because of their material bodies yet female debaters are not allowed to discuss these everyday experiences of violence in debate. The phallic structure emphasizes logics that result in women’s exclusion from debate

**Eisenberg in 2012**

Stephanie Esienberg “Speaking from the Margins: Negotiating barriers to women’s participation and success in policy debate” San Francisco State.

Particular types of argument choices may affect the way participants experience a debate round. For example, debaters may experience some pushback to some of the arguments they wish to speak about in debate, especially if they are trying to integrating personal experiences into their argument. For example, Akila explains that debaters tend to treat each other as if it is a race to the bottom, where the ballot is the only thing that matters. Judy notes that this norm of the community to place emphasis on competitive success allows people to justify arguments that are reprehensible or “not okay.” Akila highlights several examples of teams who will justify racism, sexism and imperialism as appropriate side effects of advocacies that claim to save the lives of many people from potential nuclear war scenarios constructed through a lens of political realism. Ivana notes that externalized logic, large body counts and phallic weapons are privileged over personal experience or “your own body.” Akila feels that debaters don’t place an emphasis on trying to relate to one another, and feels that debate isn’t an alternative space where students are encouraged to relate more ethically towards one another. Like Judy, Akila agrees that the atmosphere promotes an emphasis on competitive success that makes debate feel like “warfare,” a common masculine metaphor. Akila shares: On a personal level, I spent time writing this poem to try to convey to you what being a woman of color and an immigrant is like under this year’s topic which is immigration, but because of the way that we are taught to socialize in a sort of militarized space that is debate, that gets lost until it becomes some sort of arsenal or some sort of weapon. My narrative is just a reason we should win because it foregrounds experiences of immigrants…that’s not a good way of understanding why people put themselves in debates. People put themselves in debates because debate needs to be less insular; it needs to be less detached from the reality of what we talk about. While some women experienced this as a barrier, others did not perceive specific arguments as inherently gendered or as a roadblock to their participation or success in debate. Even though Catherine adopts this particular perspective, she has become more aware of language choices in argumentation, and explains that she frequently hears rhetoric that equates certain argument choices with weakness, such as comparing arguments with rape or making comments such as “that’s gay” or other. These comparisons serve to reaffirm hegemonic masculinity, and Catherine feels that this type of rhetoric is a distinct barrier to inclusion in debate. In order to combat some of these barriers, women utilize argument choice itself as a tactic. Ivana, for example, frequently deploys feminist arguments in debate rounds. She notes that even though some men in the community find it acceptable to speak more candidly about women’s bodies and sexual experiences, it is perpetually taboo to speak about women’s bodies in debate rounds. Ivana deployed arguments related to women’s menstruation as one way to engage this dichotomy she is confronted with. Thomas (2007) explains how the menstruation taboo in modern Western society is “restricting Western women from full citizenship” (p. 76). Ivana’s decision to speak out in this public forum about women’s menstruation might be thought of as a tactic to confront this taboo while reclaiming a sense of citizenship in the debate community or even in the round itself. By requiring both the judge to listen and the other team to engage her discussion of menstruation, she can call for a questioning of this simultaneous objectification and silencing of women while establishing a space for her to feel engaged and empowered by her argument. Other women chose to approach these tensions by using personal experience as evidence, sharing their own stories in debate rounds. Davis (2007) argues that “women’s subjective accounts of their experiences and how they affect their everyday practices need to be linked to a critical interrogation of the cultural discourses, institutional arrangements, and geopolitical contexts in which these accounts are invariably embedded” (p. 133) This is precisely what these women are doing, weaving their own narratives in with theoretical texts and political events situated while acknowledging the particular institutional space the activity is located in. Lucille doesn’t feel that she uses tactics in debate rounds very often to overcome these barriers, however she notes that there are instances where enough was enough and she spoke about her subjectivity as a woman. Several women noted that being able to speak about being a female or femininity in general while also remaining strategic and successful was an empowering tactic. Akila calls these types of tactics “little disruptions,” or subversive instances in debate that challenge their competitors and judges to a moment of reflexivity.

#### Like women in debate, women of the anti-toxic waste movement have been excluded from public policy discussions regarding nuclear energy production. Women’s particular ways of knowing are ruled as illegitimate and unqualified for public debates by the NRC and other state officials. Even within anti-nuclear activism, women are regulated to administrative “shit work” and organizational tasks. Women’s material bodies are consistently ignored in academic and policy discussions of nuclear energy production and anti-waste activism.

**Culley & Angelique in 03**

Culleyand Angelique 2003- Culley is a PhD Community Psychologist at University of Missouri – Kansas. Angelique PhD Psychologist and Professor of Community Psychology and Social Change at Penn State. *Women’s Gendered Experiences as Long-term Three Mile Island Activists. Gender and Society,* Vol. 17, No. 3 (Jun., 2003), pp. 445-461.

Women are leading the antinuclear/anti-toxic waste movement in the United States and abroad. Women antitoxic activists have challenged and redefined the political power structure at a time when possibilities for progressive social change often seem dismal (Ackelsberg 2001). Those engaged in this process have described the experience as personally and politically transformative (Brown and Ferguson 1995; Cable 1992; Epstein 1993; Hill 1997; Krauss 1993a, 1993b; Pardo 1990). Although social movement involvement itself has been associated with participants' personal and political changes (Lawson and Barton 1980; McCourt 1977; McPherson and Smith-Lovin 1986; Neal and Phillips 1991; Thorne 1975), no literature to date has analyzed the content of perceived changes associated with long-term, local antinuclear activist efforts among women. National activist efforts tend to be more broadly focused and more ambiguous, by nature, than local efforts. Because national organizations are accountable to multiple constituencies, they are less likely to take on the most controversial topics (Lowry 1998). Instead, national activists must be prepared to make compromises to gain a seat at the negotiating table and to appease as many constituents as possible. Women's participation in broad-focused social movements (e.g., civil rights, general environmental, antiwar, etc.) has often reflected society's gendered division of labor (Lawson and Barton 1980; McCourt 1977; McPherson and Smith-Lovin 1986; Neal and Phillips 1991; Popielarz 1999; Thorne 1975). Generally, men occupy the formal leadership positions and devise strategies, while women perform organizational tasks, doing what Thorne (1975, 181) called the "shitwork." This perpetuates the commonly held stereotype that men perform activities of production, while women perform those of reproduction. In contrast, local environmental activists respond to specific concerns that are immediate and geographically close (Epstein 1993). These activists are more likely to focus on single issues (Krauss 1993a) that pose an immediate hazard to one's community. Because threat is imminent, compromises are often perceived as suspect. Local environmental activism is also less likely to be a white, middle-class movement than national organizations (Lowry 1998). At the local level, women are leading many grassroots efforts (Brown and Ferguson 1995; Cable 1992; Epstein 1993; Hill 1997; Krauss 1993a, 1993b; Levine 1982; Pardo 1990). Over time, women's participation evolves from "female-based" (e.g., organizational) tasks to "male-based" (e.g., leadership, public speaking) duties (Brown and Ferguson 1995; Cable 1992; Hill 1997; Lawson and Barton 1980; McCourt 1977; Pardo 1990). Cable (1992, 39) noted, "Protest involvement itself over time creates changes in the nature of participation itself." It is easy to imagine that involvement with issues that may pose immediate threats can have a powerful effect on activists themselves. Antinuclear and anti-toxic waste activism is couched in an understanding of technology and science. Women involved in antitoxic activism encounter barriers, particularly the socially constructed and deeply embedded beliefs about women and science that are consistent with feminists' conceptions of the hierarchical nature of the personal/private ("female realm") and the public/political ("male realm") (Ferree 1983; Frye 1983; Gurin 1985; Jaggar 1983; Smith 1987). Science ("rational/masculine") has typically rejected women's "ways of knowing" in antitoxic efforts (e.g., "informal," "experience based," "housewife surveys") as unscientific, unobjective, and irrational (Brown and Ferguson 1995; Krauss 1993a). Gender, it appears, plays a substantial role in undermining women's antinuclear activist efforts. Nonetheless, women involved in antitoxic activism are often prompted to act on threats posed by specific hazardous waste sites to the health, well-being, and survival of their families and communities. The literature suggests that women's activism in these cases is influenced by identification with "traditional" roles such as mother and/or housewife (Ackelsberg 2001; Brown and Ferguson 1995; Cable 1992; Gibbs 1982; Hill 1997; Krauss 1993a, 1993b; Pardo 1990). In this way, gen- der acts as a motivator for antinuclear/anti-toxic waste activism. In local social movements in particular, knowledge of power asymmetries is often a result of women's activism, rather than a priori. The "everyday" and the "particular" (e.g., mothers' recognition that something is wrong, rooted in experiences at home, with children, or neighbors) often contradict "expert" or "official" accounts (Brown and Ferguson 1995; Cable 1992; Gibbs 1982; Hill 1997; Krauss 1993a, 1993b; Pardo 1990). Thus, many women have had to prepare to debate with the "experts" to make their case by gaining knowledge in areas of toxicology, nuclear engineering, biology, and research methods (Brown and Ferguson 1995; Couch and Kroll-Smith 1997). This has changed dramatically the relationship between local residents, the "experts," and the meaning of "expert" knowledge. As such, women's antitoxic activism has led to a redefinition of gender equity issues on both personal and political levels (Cable 1992; Gibbs 1982; Hill 1997; Krauss 1993a, 1993b; Pardo 1990) To briefly summarize, local activists' efforts are focused on issues that are highly personal and that they perceive have negative consequences for themselves and their communities. In antitoxic local activism, threats to one's self and loved ones are considered immediate and potentially deadly. Women sense that something is wrong (e.g., awareness of children's, family members', or neighbors' symptoms/ illness) and "insist on its validity as knowledge" (Brown and Ferguson 1995, 151). According to past research (Krauss 1993b; Pardo 1990), gender acts as both a barrier and a facilitator to activism for women in local antitoxic movements. However, past researchers have not examined the effects of gender on long-term activism. In this study, we explore the extent to which gender is perceived as a barrier and/or facilitator over two decades of activism. Discussions of long-term transformative effects of women's activism, particularly in localized toxic waste movements, are largely absent from the empirical literature (Brown and Ferguson 1995; Cable 1992). Unlike Walsh's (1988) early investigation of community mobilization, this study focuses on the gendered experiences and changes associated with two decades of ongoing local antinuclear/ anti-toxic waste activism. Through a qualitative study, we extend Krauss's (1993b) and Pardo's (1990) earlier work on the importance of the "everyday" and the "particular" in women's activist efforts. For local women activists, especially antitoxic activists, the "personal" is an important precursor for political action. While both Krauss and Pardo described the importance of everyday experiences for women activists, we reveal some of the specific links between women's personal and political transformations over decades of activism. Women involved in two decades of Three Mile Island (TMI) activism provide a unique opportunity to explore questions of perceived transformation associated with long-term antitoxic activism. A brief summary of the TMI accident, its impact on residents, and subsequent community mobilization follows to place our research in context.

**Public policy discussions concerning nuclear energy production ignore the accidents of testing and waste that violate women’s bodies – The nuclear industry AS WELL AS the government have glossed over such violence by silencing the everyday, particular experiences of women.**

**Culley & Angelique in 03**

Culley andAngelique2003- Culley is a PhD Community Psychologist at University of Missouri – Kansas. Angelique PhD Psychologist and Professor of Community Psychology and Social Change at Penn State. *Women’s Gendered Experiences as Long-term Three Mile Island Activists. Gender and Society,* Vol. 17, No. 3 (Jun., 2003), pp. 445-461.

Two of the women interviewed were pregnant at the time of the accident. Each described feelings of violation and anger. Furthermore, most of the women described how their reports of area health effects have consistently been minimized, diluted, and/or blatantly ignored by the "experts" to this day. To a great extent, women's experiences as TMI activists parallel feminists' observations in other social movements that consciousness **transformation often begins with the "everyday" and "particular**" (Ferree 1983; Frye 1983; Gurin 1985; Jaggar 1983; Smith 1987). These specific daily events, like mothers' recognition that something is wrong, are rooted in experiences at home, with children, or with neighbors and set events into motion that ultimately led to personal transformations. Women's political participation grew out of their personal, everyday experiences. Personal transformations, based on everyday experiences and local knowledge, set the stage for developing a critical perspective and understanding power. Accordingly, a link to societal change was established through themes of assuming a political identity and a legacy of activism. Developing a Critical Perspective Four of the women indicated that they developed mistrust for the government and industry officials because of their activist efforts. They described their transition from patriot (believing that those in authority were in office to look out for the public's health and safety) to questioning skeptics (discovering a world where authority figures sometimes lied and appeared to be looking out for the industry). Both Linda B. and Paula K. recalled despising Vietnam War protesters for questioning the government. Paula noted, "Little did I know, years later I would be marching down the very same Pennsylvania avenue." Linda B. recalled thinking, "They [the government] took good care of us and didn't let things happen to us." Before her involvement, Debbie B. argued that she was "the most patriotic person you could ever meet in your entire life." She came to believe that "politicians are not there for the people." Joyce C. asserted that she developed a kind of callousness toward government and maintained that her "belief that government [took] care of us" was shattered. Understanding Power These same four women made references to a novel recognition of power asymmetries, one that was set up in favor of the industry and the government. Paula K. recalled, "They had the resources of attorneys and everything-it was David against Goliath. We'd have bake sales to try to help defray some of the costs of printing and things. We didn't stand a chance." Linda B. remembered discovering that "it has nothing to do with my inalienable rights..,. the way the government's run." Recognizing the costs to those with less power, she observed, "It's not like us peons down here have too much to say about what they're doin' [appointed NRC members] and yet we're the ones that experience the brunt of it when something goes wrong." Debbie B. realized, "You're at the mercy of who operates those plants, as far as the information that you get." She asserted, "They have so much control ... in the plans [and] in the outcome." Joyce C. shared her perceptions of meetings with NRC officials in Washington, D.C., that succinctly described differences of power: [We] sat at this huge mahogany table-it must've been 10 feet long, big enough for 20 [or] 25 people-with our Sunday best on and our little wannabe briefcases.... And here sits these men in Brooks Brothers suits, wing-tipped shoes and $500 briefcases on the table and I'm thinkin' to myself, why in the hell am I here? Over time, spreading knowledge among the women of power asymmetries helped to solidify their commitment to activism, while assumptions about their own abilities, their families' health, and the sociopolitical environment were shaped through the analysis of everyday experience.

**The perceived objectivity and neutrality in nuclear energy production is a tool of the phallic system. Science has been co-opted by hegemonic masculinity and used to ignore women’s material bodies. This is not an essentialist claim about biologics for all women; rather, that the everyday experiences of *these* women reveal a distinctive identity rooted in the gendered experience.**

**Brown, 1995**

 Phil Brown is a Professor at Brown University in Environmental Sociology and Health, Faith I. T. Ferguson, "*Making a Big Stink": Women's Work, Women's Relationships, and Toxic Waste Activism*. Gender and Society, Vol. 9, No. 2 (Apr., 1995), pp. 145-172 Sage Publications, Inc. Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/189869>. Accessed: 17/12/2012 18:12

This challenge is made using objectivity as the standard against which lay work is judged, and objectivity debates are central to the gender-and-science question. We view this phenomenon in light of an awareness that science is historically, culturally, and structurally shaped very strongly by embedded beliefs about gender and women's role in science as well as about lay forms of knowledge and the value of subjective everyday experience. The women toxic waste activists' struggle not only is about the material conditions that have led to their exposure, but is centrally about the uses of knowledge and the validity of claims to recognition and authority as knowers. The leaders of toxic waste groups are often women. This is commonly reported by national toxics organizations, in many case studies, and in the personal observations of scholars in this area. EHN, a national group that works with several hundred local organizations, estimates that 70 percent of activists in local and statewide groups are women, in comparison to 30 percent in national groups (Price-King 1994). In Krauss's (1994) extensive interviews with toxic waste activists in various parts of the country, the majority were women. Raw percentages of women members of toxic waste activist groups may, however, underestimate actual activism. In Cable's study of Yellow Creek, Kentucky, women made up half the members, but mainly because most members were married couples. Since women carried out most of the work in that group, the 50 percent figure undercounts women's involvement. Cable (1994) believes that this phenomenon is typical in toxic waste organizations. The only evidence from a national sample comes from Freudenberg's (1984) survey of organizations involved in environmental health issues. Freudenberg drew a sample of 242 groups using inquiries to environmental, public interest, consumer, health, and citizen action groups and from reviews of three national newspapers and various environmental publications over a three-year period. Usable responses came from 110 organizations. Although Freudenberg did not ask the gender of group leaders, he did ask the occupation. The most common occupation for the leaders of these groups was homemaker (41 percent), which is typically a response given by women. We can assume that even if only 17 percent of those listing other occupations were women, women clearly make up a majority. Most likely, more than 17 percent of those listing other occupations are women, making it likely that women are a majority. Case studies of women toxic waste activists support Sara Ruddick's assertion that women's work and perceptions tend to be rooted, at least initially, in the concrete and the everyday. Bale suggests that the upsurge in environmental action in the 1970s, and toxic waste activism in particular, was for women "an attempt [by women] to attach meaning to their fears and pain" (1990, 421) resulting from exposure to toxic waste. Among toxic waste activists, this assertion is reflected in the following quote from a local activist: 'The real issues came down to the human level. What we have seen in this community is kids die. When that happens, go for it" (Brown and Masterson-Allen 1994, 276). The traits and experiences of women who become toxic waste activists are not theirs simply because they are women who live in proximity to toxic waste hazards; rather, they conceptualize their action, both for themselves and a wider public, out of the meaning of womanhood, and especially of motherhood, in our culture. Such a broader social meaning of gender is clearly articulated by Fernandez Kelly as somewhat more complex than a simple social distinction between the sexes: Gender refers to meshed economic, political and ideological relations .... Gender circumscribes the alternatives of individuals of different sexes in the area of paid employment.... Gender is political as it contributes to differential distributions of power and access to vital resources on the basis of sexual difference. Gender implicates the shaping of consciousness and the elaboration of collective discourses which alternatively explain, legitimate, or question the position of men and women as members of families and as workers. (1990, 184) Despite the centrality of gender and emphasis on mothering in our analysis, as Morgen points out, much of the literature on women and community organizing tends to begin with the presupposition that a sexual division of labor determines that women activists work primarily out of their conventional private-sphere responsibilities (i.e., family service and motherhood) and that this presupposition limits our understanding of women's activist work within the community. She notes, however, that "women's community-based political activism is a conscious and collective way of expressing and acting on their interests as women, as wives and mothers, as members of neighborhoods and communities, and as members of particular race, ethnic and class groups" (1988, 111). **Rather than making an essentialist argument about women's nature** as the determinant of this particular kind of activism, it is in this sense of **distinctive identity rooted in gendered experience, especially the encounter with scientific expertise and the activists' growing belief in their own knowledge as authoritative, that we approach the work of women toxic waste activists.** While women often show a higher level of environmental concern in attitudinal surveys, they also report lower rates of activism in the broader environmental movement (Blocker and Eckberg 1989; Mohai 1992; Portney 1991); yet, they are heavily represented in both the leadership and the membership of local toxic waste activist organizations. Comparison of attitudinal studies to case studies suggests that there are important differences between environmental activists who work on a national or global scale-especially those affiliated with the older, more established environmental and conservation organizations such as the Sierra Club or the Appalachian Mountain Club-and members of smaller groups who are fighting the presence of a specific local hazard and its consequences (Dunlap and Mertig 1992; Freudenberg and Steinsapir 1992). Toxic waste activists differ from environmental activists in that the former include more women, more people of color, older people, and people with less education (Hamilton 1990).

**Phallic logic marks sciences by its perceived neutrality – this form of knowledge production favors paradigms based on white, male, hegemonic thinking. Science and objectivity stand in for the male experience by exercising hierarchical control and domination over the feminine**

**Nhanenge 7 –** Master of Arts at the development studies @ the University of South Africa (Jytte “Ecofeminism: Towards Integrating the concerns of women,, poor people and nature into development” <http://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/570/dissertation.pdf?sequence=1>)//AA

Modern science is portrayed as a universal, value-free and objective system of knowledge. It is considered to pursuit the truth, and it is presented as being valuable for all. This view has displaced all other beliefs and knowledge systems. However, feminist scholars have studied various scientific disciplines. In each area of study, they have come to understand that what is supposed to be humanly inclusive methodologies, theories, concepts and truths is less than that. Rather the products bear the mark of the collective and individual creators, who are marked by gender, class, race and culture. Production of knowledge is therefore best described as being a social activity embedded in a certain culture and world-view founded on a historical ideology. From this, it follows that Western culture favors knowledge which does not mirror the world as it is. Instead, scientific facts emerge out of a constellation of human perceptions, values and actions - a paradigm - from which they cannot be separated. According to feminists, this paradigm is based on white, male, hegemonic thinking. Science is therefore not universal, neither objective nor value-free. It is rather used in complex ways to dominate all that is not white, Western male. (Harding I986: 10, I5-16; Shiva 1989: IS; Braidotti et al I994: 30;Capm 1997: ll) Feminist critics stress that science is determined by political, economic and social conditions according to a patriarchal order, which is dualised, hierarchical and dominant. Dualism has sharply divided reality into two different categories. Accordingly, we separate the public from the private, masculine from culture from nature, mind from body, rational from emotional, quantity from quality and power from love. Such divisions have made a rift between all forms of feminine and masculine issues inside ourselves and in society. Dualised thinking consequently affects people's sense of own identity and of the world in which they live, whether they are men or women. This order of reality is also heirarchial. The first mentioned of the dualised pairs are all-masculine and considered the highest priority, "the best" or "the right" one. Thus, male is placed above female, mind above body, culture above nature, reason above emotions etc. In this way male, mind, culture and reason exercise hierarchical control and domination over female, body, nature and emotions. Thus Western experience of reality, meaning structure, language use and definition of identity are framed in relations of dualism, hierarchy, domination and control; all based on male-female opposition. These principles are deeply inscribed in the modern patterns of thinking, but they are made "normal" or "natural" and therefore seen as being neutral. (Keller 1985: 7; Biaidotti et al I994: 30-31).

**Thus, Erica and I stand in opposition of the of the restrictions on gynocentric eco-logic and the feminine experiences of the anti-toxic movement that prevents them from being acknowledged**

**Our AFF is not a forced choice –The feminine accesses strands of intersectionality that are central to anti-toxic waste activism. Gynocentric logic uses everyday experiences to bridge communities of difference and foster political activism**

**Ackelsberg 2001** – Professor of Women and Gender Studies at Smith College, PhD in Women and Gender Studies from Princeton University, *(Re)Conceiving Politics? Women's Activism and Democracy in a Time of Retrenchment Grassroots Warriors: Activist Mothering, Community Work, and the War on Poverty* by Nancy A. Naples; Community Activism and Feminist Politics: Organizing across Race, Class, and Gender by Nancy A. Naples; No Middle Ground: Women and Radical Protest by Kathleen Blee; The Politics of Motherhood: Activist Voices from Left to Right by Alexis Jetter; Annelise Orleck; Diana Taylor; Crazy for Democracy: Women in Grassroot … Review by: Martha Ackelsberg Feminist Studies, Vol. 27, No. 2 (Summer, 2001), pp. 391-418

Published by: Feminist Studies, Inc. Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/3178766 .

Nancy A. Naples's Grassroots Warriors: Activist Mothering, Community Work, and the War on Poverty is a fascinating exploration of the lives and activities of women who were involved in community- based organizations in New York and Philadelphia during the War on Poverty (roughly 1964 to 1974). Her core data are made up of interviews she conducted with approximately sixty of these women and through which she attempted to explore questions such as what motivated them to undertake community work in their neighborhoods; how did race, class, and gender intersect in their political biographies-and their consciousness; how did bureaucratization and professionalization affect their participation; and how did the changing political economy and political culture affect their work (p. 3). From our current political vantage point, when virtually all discourse about social welfare policy focuses on "welfare reform," Naples raises a fascinating question: what was the role of the state in shaping women's "community work" and/or in creating or expanding arenas for citizenship? The idea that the state might actually create, rather than effectively constrict, opportunities for citizenship offers a refreshing change from contemporary political realities. One of the most valuable aspects of this study, then, is its evocation of a different political-economic moment, when "maximum feasible participation of the poor" rather than "ending welfare as we know it" was the watchword of social policy. Naples explores the impact of that differing policy context on the poor women who were the primary actors at the local level, examining their routes into activism through what she terms "activist mothering," the ways they were changed by their participation, and the ways their participation affected their understandings of themselves as (previously non-) political beings. "Activist mothering," she writes, "highlights the community workers' gendered conceptualization of activism on behalf of their communities. .. . Central to their constructions of 'community' was a convergence of racial-ethnic identification and class affiliation." "Activist mothering," therefore, "includes self-conscious struggles against racism, sexism, and poverty" (p. 114) Being a mother, however, does not automatically generate an oppositional consciousness; in fact, Naples's informants point to a number of different paths into activism, including religious involvement (particularly for Black women and those involved in the Catholic Worker movement), social work, radical politics, participation in other social movements (e.g., the civil rights movement), and Black women's traditions of community caretaking. Interestingly, most of these activists did not identify themselves as "politically engaged" and made a separation between what they understood as their "community work" and what they identified as "politics" (by which they seemed to mean voting, lobbying their elected officials, and so forth). These women saw their community work as simply "a logical extension of their desire to improve the lives of their families and neighbors," what Temma Kaplan originally defined as "female consciousness."' Yet, Naples argues, their "gendered identities as women, daughters, mothers, or workers intersected with racial, ethnic, class, professional, and political identities to create a complex and oftentimes contradictory set of forces that informed their consciousness of inequality as well as motivation to fight for social and economic justice" (p. 181). Many were profoundly changed by their experiences, coming to see themselves as "community workers" and then as empowered citizens, with a right and an obligation to act on behalf of their communities and to make claims against the state. Significantly, Naples attempts to draw lessons from that time for our own. Thus, she notes, "the War on Poverty, with its emphasis on maximum feasible participation, transformed their previously unpaid community work into paid work and, at the same time, empowered them as residents of low-income communities- resulting in a merging of social and political citizenship" (p. 199). Yet, she recognizes the limits of this strategy as well: increasing pressure for professionalization limited the ongoing participation (and influence) of these community workers even in the "heyday" of the War on Poverty. Furthermore, the state that had facilitated politicization and empowerment through its policies could, by cutting back those same programs, limit and virtually eliminate the women's participation. Naples acknowledges the "contradictions of state-sponsored, community-based employment" as a strategy to end poverty, both economic and political. But, she insists, the contemporary move away from income supports and the "fragmentation of social life into discrete policy arenas fails to capture the mutually constitutive relationships between family income, childcare, health care, housing, education, employment, and so forth" (p. 195). Effective social policies to combat poverty must address the interconnections among these problems and must recognize not just women's "double duty" of paid employment and care for household and family, but a third component, as well: "community work." Only when that work is recognized, validated, and compensated, and when women's contributions in that arena are effectively incorporated into our social policies, are we likely to make any real progress toward a more democratic and egalitarian society.8

**The affirmative is a Gynocentric eco-logic that reveals nodes of potential for the female body to resist oppression. The phallic logic inherent in scientific thought permeates public policy discussions on nuclear energy production. Our gynocentric logic is one that remains open to and respects differences. It is not about biological claims of womanhood; rather, knowledge through the subjective experiences of women’s cultural and historical location.**

 **Glazebrook in 2k5**

(Trish, Associate Professor of Philosophy at Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia, *Ethics & the Environment* 10.2 (2005) 75-99, Gynocentric Eco-logics)

Likewise, I wish to provide a diagnosis and etiology, and suggest a curative possibility for a disease of modernity I will call phallic logic. Symptomatic of this sickness are wide-spread social alienation, global domination and oppression on the basis of gender, race, class and color, and epidemic eco-destruction. A body of critique exists in ecofeminist analyses that experiences these symptoms as a single disease: the phallic logic of modernity. "Logic" in this context does not mean the formal discipline [End Page 75] in which rules for the proper manipulation of abstract statements are laid down. Rather, "logic" in the sense used here is an epistemological term. It means the ways that understanding is structured. Phallic logic is the structure of understanding that permeates patriarchy. This logic takes its paradigm from scientific objectivity, but even voices from within the sciences themselves are arguing that contemporary human being must establish new ways of thinking about nature. I propose that such new eco-logics, that is, ways of thinking about nature, take their guidance from the physical environment. If nature informs knowledge claims, then knowledge itself is construed organically: it is finite and changing rather than fixed and eternal. Such logics can encompass the finitude of physical embodiment as an epistemological principle, and hence I identify them as gynocentric. They are not grounded in the disembodied Cartesian subject that feminists have shown so often and clearly to be typical of androcentric philosophizing. These logics draw instead on the physicality of environmental elements as well as of the thinker, and thus they allow nature's temporality to resonate within knowledge itself. They are not satisfied with a conceptual contrast between nature's on-going coming-to-be and passing-away and the alleged universality of knowledge. Rather, they take nature as a model for truth and acknowledge that nature infuses the things we say to be truth. There is an abundance of arguments for the differences between male and female writing and thinking.[2](http://muse.jhu.edu.ezproxy.mnl.umkc.edu/journals/ethics_and_the_environment/v010/10.2glazebrook.html#FOOT2) I speak in accord with these voices, but I frame my project differently. I will begin by presenting evidence of a call for alternative epistemologies from within the sciences, and then use ecofeminist analyses to argue that the scientists in question are moving away from a phallic logic toward gynocentric eco-logics. Next I will make clear three assumptions that underlie my account. The first two are Heideggerian. I accept his argument that the logic of modernity is scientific objectivity, and I use his account of truth and essence to argue that knowledge is situated rather than universal. Hence gynocentric eco-logics entail an essentialism that is historical rather than biological. I give up biology as the fixative for essence, but avoid a decline into what is entirely arbitrary and subjective by fixing essence in terms of cultural and historical location. Hence I am using a Heideggerian notion of situatedness, but applying it specifically to gender such that I can maintain that the category of "woman" is neither universal, nor shattered irreparably into [End Page 76]fragmented individualism. My Heideggerianism is further qualified in that I am not writing in the spirit of Heidegger's life-time project. I will take the force of his insights to be epistemological rather than metaphysical or ontological, against both his explicit articulation of his project, and the usual preference for metaphysics that pervades the Heideggerian literature. My third assumption is that gynocentric eco-logics are not gender-exclusive. Rather than simply inverting phallic logic, they instead orchestrate an openness to and respect for differences that displace any logic of domination. Thus they make a place for phallic logic, but resist its excessive claim to universality. Analogously, in treating a yeast infection, one does not eliminate the fungus, but returns a balance to the system within healthy parameters. In the last section, I will begin an explication of gynocentric eco-logics by modeling truth organically. I could call my project "alternative epistemology," but I suggest that all epistemologies are alternatives, even phallic logic that claims to be universal.