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Ileana Rodriguez (2016). Gender Violence in Failed and Democratic States: Besieging Perverse Masculinities. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 208 Pages. ISBN 978-1-137-59833-2

In this book, Rodriguez aims to understand the roots of gender violence, more specifically men's violence against women. For this purpose, throughout the book, she gives examples of specific cases such as Nicaragua, the U.S.S.R, Austria and the U.S.A., and examines these examples through mostly psychoanalysis and sometimes through by political science perspectives. The book is an easy read as the case studies - by utilizing newspaper articles- are used as a very useful tool to exemplify the theories behind. Moreover, some literary sources such as poems and novels, or even movies are utilized to reveal male desire and male view of violence against the women which are the true roots of gender violence against women.

The book consists of nine exclusive chapters. In all of these chapters, Rodriguez actually aims to reply to the question: "Why gender violence occurs?" Looking at male through a psychological approach, she argues that the malfunctioning of male psychology, so-called "perversion", is one of the root causes of violence against women. Secondly, she associates the idea of "male perversion" with the state by arguing that there is a relationship between state and masculinity; the state can naturalise sexual desire of men so male desire might reflect in the institution of state.

Owing to the fact that she focuses on male perversion, she examines news about rape cases especially the ones which include paedophilia and incest. Referring to Freud and Lacan quite often, Rodriguez clearly connects her idea of perversion with the psychology of individuals. She uses the Oedipal Complex as an essential concept since it refers to boy's excessive adoration for his mother and the desire to murder his father. He desires to murder his father because he can take his father's place to sleep together with the mother. In this way, he can enjoy the pleasure of breaking the rules of the father. Normally, the Oedipal Complex and the obsession with breaking the law of the father might be overcome successfully in the early ages, if not it might cause some psychological problems. Thus, the author put strong psychological arguments to claim that the law of the father is important to analyse the gender violence because pervert desires to revolt against his father's rule as well as he feels incomplete and demands to be completed. Being completed is important because if he is threatened by his father's power, he should be perfect to resist his father who is very powerful and have the capability to murder his own children. The pervert would tend to see himself magnificent and adore himself so that he can ace the father out. This extreme love for himself refers to narcissism. A narcissist adores himself and believes that he is capable to do everything and get everything that he wants. But on the other hand, he is extremely fragile and seeks help from the mother. Because when he was a part of his mother, he was able to satisfy his needs very effortlessly and he was never challenged with difficulty. At this

point, Rodriguez suggests that the demand for returning to the safeness of the uterus and being an inextricable part of the mother causes narcissism and misrecognition of self which reflects itself in the state's institutions as masculine power. This demonstrates itself particularly when the state implies laws as an apparatus of male power. This situation creates social injustice because the relationship between sexuality and masculinity regenerates in the state power developing masculine performing state institutions. Moreover, it does not only include a state and its inner territory but the male power can also be seen as a regulatory power in the realm of international law. Thus, disregarding the characteristics of the state, whether it is failed states or democratic, authoritarian or liberal, the masculine power dominates the politics of each state and citizen's daily lives. She argues that gender violence is a dominant socio-cultural paradigm in the world because the state is linked to the power and domination of masculinity. Male libido, being at the center of most state practices, is the reason of this domination and the oppressive state behavior. It is hard to find a state practice which encourages weak ones against to masculinity. Thus, it explains why gender violence does not differ from society to society.

If these two concepts (Oedipal complex and narcissism) merge, it is possible to say that the male libido and the demand for returning to the safe place are preserved by the state as a natural right of men over women. This results in the recognition of men's right for sexual violence against women by the state apparatus. The consensus policies between the victim and the offender or loopholes of the laws which provide benefits to the offenders against the victims are all the results of such an approach by the state.

This book has several strengths. First of all, the structure of the book is very clear. The author carefully touches upon different aspects of the roots of gender violence including local and global perspectives. Comparing four different countries, the book touches upon different issues such as pornography, eroticism, incest, and paedophilia by analysing adults and children separately as the types of violence may vary between them. By having this well-structured wide coverage, this book broadens the readers' understanding of gender violence. Although it is well-structured, it would have been much better if the author has created better liaisons between nine chapters.

Second, this book is a very good example of an interdisciplinary approach to the issue of gender violence including disciplines such as political science, psychology, philosophy and philology, and cinematography. This approach strengthens and makes this book an immensely fruitful read. Moreover, the literature that the author utilizes has also a large coverage of various disciplines reflecting on multiple dimensions of the issue. Thus, this book's bibliography might be very useful reading list for undergraduate and graduate students.

Third, the edgy examples that the author chooses to illustrate her arguments make this book very interesting and impressive read. With the dramatic examples, the reader can easily realize how horrible gender violence could be. The author develops a double-sided understanding of the issue by reflecting on

both the side of victims and the offenders. Although this is an advantage of the book, these examples sometimes become so extensive and touchy that the readers might forget what the main point is. The author uses too many detailed expressions so that it is sometimes difficult to distinguish whether it is a book or a newspaper. On the other hand, although the book's name is "Gender Violence in Failed and Democratic States", most of the examples are from Nicaragua. The book presents an unequal pattern for case studies as there is only an example from Austria and another from the U.S.A. All in all, one can say that the examples affect the readers negatively since they distract the readers' attention and prevent to focus on the main argument of the book. It would be better if the book would have contained more theory and fewer examples. One of the solutions to this problem might be to shift the emphasis of the relationship between male and his mother to the male's relationships with society and with the state. This shift would be much more effective for examining the effects of the state's characteristics on gender violence. Through this approach, this book could better answer such research questions as *Does the state make the male feel uncompleted? Does the state directly cause to gender violence? Do the state's masculine characteristics cause gender violence?* and *What if there is no state?*

One of the weaknesses of the book is its title Gender Violence in Failed and Democratic States, as the readers might think that the book is either theoretical or has a global coverage. However, the book is about the states which lead to massive institutional gender violence against women in their territories. Thus, although the book is from the Comparative Feminist Series of Springer, a systematic comparative approach between the democratic and failed states is mostly missing in this book. The case of Nicaragua as an example of a failed state covers almost the whole book. Even when the author presented the case of Porto-Rico, the victim was a little Nicaraguan girl and the Soviet case remained invisible between the examples from Nicaragua. Furthermore, the case studies of democratic states, Austria and U.S.A., remain very limited and superficial.

In spite of its disadvantages, this book is a good contribution to the literature. This book can be read especially by everyone including the public, scholars, students, journalist, and researchers. In short, Ileana Rodriguez's "Gender Violence in Failed and Democratic States: Besieging Perverse Masculinities", written in a fluent language, can provide the readers a broad perspective on the roots of gender violence. The readers can benefit from and enjoy this book very much.

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