"A Great Way to Fly": Nationalism, the State, and the Varieties of Third-World Feminism

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Third-World feminism, by virtue of its vexed historical origins and complicated negotiations with contemporary state apparatuses, is necessarily a chimerical, hydra-headed creature, surviving in a plethora of lives and guises. In some countries, it may manifest itself as an organized national movement, complete with networks and regional chapters. In other countries, it may exist only as a kind of hit-and-run guerilla feminism: a feminism, perhaps, that arises spontaneously around issue-centered activity, that organizes itself in small, temporary neighborhood groupings which may eschew or refuse the name of feminism; or a feminism which piggybacks on that ubiquitous institution of the Third World, the nongovernmental organization (NGO). Third-World feminisms do not have the luxury of predictability; and a feminist theory that would be global in its compass, as in its intentions, must expect to be surprised by the strategies, appearance, and forms of feminism that emerge and are effective in Third-World contexts. As Third-World feminists themselves realize only too well, the difficulty of discussing Third-World feminism arises in the first instance as a difficulty of identifying the concretions and forms of effectiveness in the Third World that can be grasped as feminist.

Whatever the particular shape of the local manifestations, however, all Third-World feminisms contend, in differing equations, with three principal factors that condition their emergence and survival. First, Third-World feminism is haunted by its historical origins, which continue to overshadow its character and future prospects. Historically, almost without exception, in the form of anticolonial/anti-imperialist struggles,
The forceful divergence of feminist and national interests in the Third World is further complicated by the looming and often interventionist role of the state as a regulatory, juridical, administrative, or military force in Third-World countries. Because governments in contemporary Southeast Asia exercise considerable control over public institutions and organizations within state boundaries, for instance, feminism often manifests itself as a resistance to feminist activity along formal lines. To evade state control, legislative interference, or other governmental regulatory activity, feminism in Southeast Asia sometimes assumes the character of informal collectivities and local groups, existing humbly but usefully as small-scale feminisms.

A third factor mediating the adaptations and strategies of feminism in the Third World is the ambivalence of Third-World nations—Third-World nationalism—and the advent of modernity. Perhaps because nationalism is itself of modern provenance or because the nation is a modern construct whose ideological bases must be continually renewed and secured, an attendant anxiety over modernity, particularly in the sociocultural register, is endemic in Third-World contexts. Even where a systemic transformation to modernity, in economic and social organization, is sought and implemented by nations and nationalisms in the Third World as a desideratum of development, a resistance to the totalizing implications of modernization is invariably sedimented at some juncture of the modernization process. Acceptance of modernity's incursions, then, comes to operate selectively: a division in the rhetoric of nationalist discourse appears, distinguishing between the technological and economic machinery of modernization (which can continue to be deemed useful, indeed, essential to the nation), and the cultural apparatus of modernization—the alarming detritus of modernity's social effects—which may be guarded against as contaminating, dangerous, and undesirable.4 Co-constituted in countries where modernization or reform follows the nation's emergence from Western colonial subjection, or where a resurgent religious or other nationalism is the dominant mode of nationalist culture, nationalist antipathy to modernity's social impact may be expressed as antipathy to the West and to Western cultural modalities. The ease with which, historically, the "modern" and the "Western" have been conflated and offered as synonymous, interchangeable counters in both nationalist and Orientalist discourse has meant that a nationalist accusation of modern and/or foreign—that is to say, Western—provenance or influence, when directed at a social movement, has been sufficient for the movement's delegitimization.

Given feminism's uneasy status in the Third World, its problematic relationships with nationalism, and (like nationalism) its relatively brief genealogy, Third-World feminism has been especially liable to manipulation by nationalists for its symbolizing potential, as a capsule instance of the encroachment of modernity and/or Westernization. Just as women's issues, female
emancipation, and feminism lend themselves to nationalist self-figuration at a given historical moment of nationalist formation, so do they lend themselves to the symptomatic figuration of nationalism's ambivalence to both modernity and the West. Antifeminist nationalists in Egypt and elsewhere in the Middle East, for instance, have historically represented feminism as the subversive figure, at once of a destabilizing modernity and of a presumptuous Western imperialism (Philipp 1978). Indeed, nationalism is so powerful a force in the Third World that to counter the charge of antinationalism—the assertion that feminism is of foreign origin and influence, and therefore implicitly or expressly antinational—the strategic response of a Third-World feminism under threat must be, and has sometimes been, to assume the nationalist mantle itself: seeking legitimation and ideological support in local cultural history, by finding feminist or protofeminist myths, laws, customs, characters, narratives, and origins in the national or communal past or in strategic interpretations of religious history or law. That is to say, through the glass of First-World feminisms, Third-World feminisms may appear to be willfully naïve, nativist, or essentialist in their ideological stances: the requirement of an unexceptionable genealogy, history, or tradition for feminism must assume decisive priority.

In the section that follows, I track the vicissitudes and adaptations of feminism in one Southeast Asian country, focusing with particular, though not exclusive, emphasis on the postcolonial nation-state of Singapore.

A common denominator in the linked national histories of Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia is the appearance of feminism in dramatic concert with nationalism in anticolonial independence movements. Feminist women leaders arose who were also prominent nationalist political organizers; political parties on the left and the right articulated feminist goals in the anti-imperialist struggle, with the twin aims of mobilizing mass support and attaching to themselves a powerfully symbolic instrument of ideological self-description; women's groups were institutionalized that had formal affiliations to, or close informal ties with, national political parties; and, finally, all three countries witnessed the absorption of feminist leaders and feminist issues into political structures that dispersed and disengaged feminist interests in the postcolonial period.

In contrast to the history of feminism in Indonesia, where the first institutional women's movements began as independent partners of nationalist organizations to which they were not initially subordinated, feminism in Singapore and Malaysia arose as a subset of nationalist politics, so that the hierarchical relationship of feminism to nationalism—an asymmetry of tension and use—was plainly visible from the outset. The two principal factions contesting for national political power in the wake of British colonial administration in Singapore—a Communist faction, later grouped as the Barisan Socialist, and social democrats organized as the People's Action Party, or PAP (which subsequently formed the postcolonial government that rules Singapore today)—both harnessed feminist issues to their national platforms. The first created a Singapore Women's Federation as a front organization for revolutionary activity, and the second sponsored a Women's League and women's subcommittees in 1956 under the direction of central PAP party leadership.6

By their own recorded account, the People's Action Party saw women's issues and feminist-activist women as a resource to be mined. A former Cabinet Minister notes in passing that "the Communists had recognized the potential of exploiting [the] injustice [suffered by women]" before the PAP had, and were first in the field to organise women into their fold" (Ong 1979).7 Significantly, the theme of female emancipation enabled the essentially reform-minded PAP, whose leadership was dominated by English-educated male elites, to present itself in powerfully revolutionary terms, the ideological resonance of which echoed and approximated the revolutionary discourse of their competitors, the Chinese-educated and China-backed Communists, whose own impetus and direction issued from the revolutionary politics of the People's Republic of China. In a section of the party's 1959 manifesto, The Tasks Ahead: PAP's Five-Year Plan 1959-1964, which originally appeared as a pre-election campaign speech by the most prominent woman feminist leader in the party, Chan Choy Siong, the theme of female emancipation is presented ringingly, in a reverberative vision of the imagined nation-to-be as a feminist-socialist utopia within a section entitled "Women in the New Singapore":8 "In a full socialist society, for which the P.A.P. will work for [sic], all people will have equal rights and opportunities, irrespective of sex, race or religion. There is no place in a socialist society for the exploitation of women."9 The manifesto announces a feminist agenda in the declarative terms of social revolution:

We will encourage women to take an active part in politics. We will help them organise a unified women's movement to fight for women's rights. We will encourage women to play their proper part in Government administration. We will open up new avenues of employment for women. We will insist that the welfare of widows and orphans must be the responsibility of Government. We will insist that married women be given an opportunity to live a full life, including the right to work on level terms with others. Under the law maternity leave and allowances will be compulsory. The P.A.P. Government will establish more creches to look after children while mothers are at work. We will encourage factories employing large numbers of women to provide creches on factory sites. The present marriage laws which permit polygamy will be
amended. The P.A.P. believes that a necessary condition for a stable home and family is monogamous marriage ... it is essential that women and their families should be protected against unscrupulous husbands who treat their wives as chattels and abandon their children and families without any thought for their future. (The Tasks Ahead)

PAP and Communist women worked to advance feminist and party goals without distinguishing between these interests, within the overarching frame and under the orders of their institutional organizations. A PAP-authored history of the party, published in 1979, baldly chronicles the cooptation of women's energies for party purposes in the simple language of use: "The Women's League was active in rallying women members and supporters to campaign for the PAP ... They were especially effective in house to house canvassing, cooking food for Party workers, distributing leaflets, and providing speakers at rallies. The women worked as hard as the men and their contribution to the success of the Party was visible to all" (Ong 1979). After the PAP successfully wrested power and constituted a national government, Chan Choy Siong was sidelined in the Party. Unlike her male compatriots and peers, she was never destined to achieve Cabinet rank. In a parliament of eighty-one elected representatives in Singapore in 1993, among seventy-seven PAP Members of Parliament, two are women. Once the PAP assumed national control, Communist women activists—more difficult to track because of their self-protective anonymity and their subsequent dispersal—were either forcibly deported to China and exiled or politically rehabilitated by the new national government; some went underground, slipping away to join the proscribed Malayan Communist Party (MCP), to wage guerilla warfare against the postcolonial governments of Singapore and Malaysia.

In Malaysia, as in Singapore, the first women's political movement, Angkatan Wanita Sedar (AWAS, or the Movement of Conscious Women), would seem to have been created at the instigation of a nationalist political party. In 1945, Parti Kebangsaan Melayu (the PKMM, or Malay Nationalist Party) founded AWAS, as much because women were needed by the party as "to arouse in Malay women the consciousness of equal rights they have with men, to free them from old bonds of tradition and to socialize them" (Dancz 1987). AWAS fell victim in the nationalist cause in 1948, proscribed by the British colonial administration. Typically, AWAS's core leadership of politically active women—Malay women politicized by an early radical Islamic education in Indonesia in the 1930s, under Indonesian teachers active in the nationalist struggle against the Dutch colonial administration—were absorbed into women's sections of national political parties or the Communist underground (Dancz 1987; Karim 1983). Aishah Ghani, the first president of AWAS, became a member of the women's division of the United Malay Nationalist Organization (UMNO), the principal political party of the ruling National Front in postcolonial Malaysia, and eventually served as president of UMNO's second women's wing (Wanita UMNO) and Minister of Social Welfare in the Malaysian Cabinet. Sakinah Junid enlisted in the Pan-Malayan Islamic Party (PMIP)—now Parti Islam Se Malaya (PAS)—and later became president of Parti Islam's women's section, Dewan Muslimat; Samsiah Fukeh, the second president of AWAS, "continued her revolutionary struggles underground, working closely with the Malay Communist Party" (Karim 1983).

In Singapore, in 1961, the postindependence government formed by the People's Action Party passed legislation addressing the legal rights of women and children, in partial fulfillment of campaign pledges to feminist nationalists and female voters. This legislative document, known as the Women's Charter, synchronously enfranchised women and produced, effectually, a legal definition of feminine identity codified around marriage, divorce, and relationship to children, as much as it also ruled in other matters on women's status as individual citizens. The Charter, in effect, legislated a description of female identity by establishing legal responses to a wide-ranging set of presumptive questions (What is a woman? What does she need? What is the nature/what are the conditions of her sexuality? What is her place? What is the place of her relationships to others?). In this specifying legal conditions pertaining specially to women and children—awarding, in that process, rights that were unquestionably vital, indeed, essential to women at the time—the Charter also enacted and codified a description of women as specially gendered subjects under the law, a sexualized codification directed specially to the state's female citizens. No comparable legislation exists that describes the configuration or borders of masculine identity under the law.

Historically, the enactment of the Women's Charter was simultaneously an enfranchising and a disenfranchising moment for feminists. After the establishment of the Charter, it was widely felt that there were "no more problems" confronting women, because the most urgent and dramatic inequities had been addressed. Men and women alike felt that Singaporean women, unlike women in other Third-World nations, had no need of feminism or a feminist movement, and until the 1980s, women's groups in Singapore assumed the form of recreational, athletic, or cultural clubs, charity or professional associations, and social work and community service organizations—a voluntary or involuntary playing-out, at the community level, of the authorized identities established for women under the law. The production and legitimation of particular feminine identities—commonly an implicit, more than an explicit, process—is of enduring importance to contemporary Third-World states. A dramatic example is the (re)dominating
of the hijab or veil by Muslim women in the Middle East, signalling the deployment of a traditional feminine identity as a powerfully symbolic icon of Islamic cultural nationalism. In Singapore, in 1983, the very survival of the nation was presented as hinging on the production of appropriate kinds of feminine identity when Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew raised the specter of a dystopian national future that would unfold if well-educated women would continue to refuse to marry and reproduce in numbers adequate to the maintenance of the class and racial elites (Heng and Devan 1992). States also profit from the manipulation of women and feminine identity as an economic resource: the production of a sexualized femininity as a commodity for negotiation and trading in the profitable, if competitive, air-travel-services market in Asia underscores the necessarily oppositional relationship between feminist interests and state-sponsored descriptions of the national interest in the contemporary Third World.  

Singapore, in particular, has exploited a sexualized Asian femininity to sell the services of its national air carrier, Singapore Airlines (SIA), with incomparably spectacular commercial success. So globally familiar is the airline’s “Singapore Girl”—never a “woman,” and certainly no mere “flight attendant,” but “a great way to fly,” as every male business traveler around the world knows—that Madame Tussaud’s of London, when it “wanted to feature a figure from air travel” among its waxworks, “found the Singapore Girl to be the most recognizable air travel figure in the world today” (Lee 1993). That the image of the Singapore woman which the airline and the state sell on the air services market is a sexual one is readily attested to. Singapore law courts recently tried a rash of sexual-molestation cases, where male air passengers of varied descriptions, races, and national origins had apparently found it impossible to resist fondling or otherwise sexually handling stewardesses on SIA flights. Indeed, so successful is the evocation of the “Singapore Girl” in her figure-hugging, Pierre Balmain-designed sarong kebaya, that a bar-club brothel in Thailand was reported to have clad its hostesses in copycat imitations of the SIA flight uniform (Tan 1991).  

Singapore is not, however, unique among Third-World states in touting and marketing the serviceability of its women and a fantastmatic Asian femininity. A recent multipart feature in the Asia Magazine (16–18 August 1991) admiringly reports how Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Indonesia all exploit, with varying degrees of success, a calculated image of their female citizens to promote national airline industries. Playing to a fantasy of what Asian women are putatively like, the countries describe the romantic sexuality, exoticism, beauty, youth, and charm of their female flight attendants, and the women’s innate, instinctual desire to please and serve. The phenomenon of trading in feminine identity is commonplace in Asia; any cursory survey of the advertising of other Asian carriers will disclose the extent to which

Third-World nations in the East casually sell the sexualized images and personal services of their female national subjects on the world market. That the legitimation of some feminine identities over others can be a matter of considerable national profit and national interest in the Third World state is clear from this commercial equation. In Singapore, the proven and continuing success of the national carrier’s advertising campaigns is propped upon an exploitation of the discourse of Orientalism, a Western discourse which the Eastern state rides in its flawless manipulation of its projected feminine image. In the course of that manipulation, an exemplary collusion is in place between postcolonial state corporatism (SIA as a government-affiliated national carrier) and neocolonial Orientalist discourse on the serviceability and exoticism of the Asian woman: a collusion that produces, through the techne of transnational global advertising and marketing, a commercial enterprise generating substantial fiscal surpluses, and vindicated at the outset as nationalist. For the nationalist credentials of this particular project of anti-foremost exploitation are never in doubt. Corporate and marketing executives of Singapore Airlines and the carrier’s advertising agency, the Batey Group, when descending to defend their marketing strategies to Singapore feminists, have instinctively tricked themselves out in nationalist drag.

More recently, the editor of the Straits Times, the country’s principal English-language daily newspaper, insinuated a suggestion that attempts by Western nations to spread the values of liberal democracy, human rights, and civil liberties to developing nations may be driven, sinestingly, by a covert desire to weaken the economic competitiveness of the Third World. Fostuning himself with the impeccable nationalist credentials of state-sponsored sexism, the editor smirked: “Young Singaporeans should think hard before they lap up whatever is in vogue. . . . Is the Singapore Girl really a sexist symbol that ought to be replaced or would agitation on this issue erode Singapore Airlines’ competitive edge? They would do well to remember that competition between nations can only heat up, and that losers will be left by the wayside.” The accompanying cartoon illustrated the editor’s contusions featured a set of posters on a barbed-wire fence representing the constitutive barrier of a Western checkpoint on the correctness of the political record of developing nations. One of the posters demands the presentation of a human-rights record; on another poster is emblazoned “Women’s Rights Charter.” Superstitiously, the illustration and the newspaper columnist tap a reservoir of Third-World suspicion at the multifariousness of Western imperialisms, and clearly, feminism and human rights are here offered as imperielisms of the economically corrosive, objectionably vogue kind.  

By contrast, Malaysian feminists note the more explicit and direct depiction of feminism by Islamic nationalists in Malaysia as a pernicious species.
of cultural infiltration—as a foreign, Western, and modern encroachment that symbolizes the many encroachments that have undermined Malay Muslim culture from the beginning of colonization:

The massive recruitments of Malaysian women into [the dakwat Islamic movement] is perceived ... to be part of a re-education or resocialization process, whereby women can be rescued from the throes of Westernization that have permeated Malay culture from the beginning of colonialism to the present... These community movements are a powerful instrumental force in projecting feminism as a component of Western liberalism which has no niche in Eastern cultures. (Karim 727)

One feminist response to the imputation by Malay Islamic nationalists that feminism is Western, antitraditional, or secular in its origins and nature, has been to cite contemporary feminist Islamic exegeses on the Qur'an who offer rereadings of that sacred text as authorizing the equality of men and women. Another feminist strategy in Southeast Asia has also been to suggest a local genealogy for feminism, by pointing to notable women figures in communal or national history and folklore. In the Philippines, for instance, there were pre-Spanish priestesses or katalonans ... heroines of the Spanish revolution, the women leaders of the Japanese occupation (Shahani 1975); in Vietnam, there were the feminist Ho Xuan Huan and folkloric resistance fighters like the Trung sisters and Trieu Thi Trinh, or Doan Thi Diem, and Bui Thi Xuan (Marr 1976); Singapore had the community-founding matriarch Yang Meikling (Wee 1987); and “the traditionally high status of women” in the Southeast Asian region’s past, particularly before colonization, is frequently cited. (Shahani 1975).

However partial or interstitial such efforts, the fundamentally oppositional relations between the interests of the state and those of feminism in the contemporary Third World makes dangerous the total abandonment of nationalist discourse, of any variety, to the exclusive monopoly of the state. In Singapore, the state’s successful combination of nationalist discourse—in particular, the discourse of national survival and of approved forms of political participation—together with a formidable array of instrumentally and apparatus of power at the state’s disposal, has determined the very nature and horizon of possibility for feminist activism.

In May 1987, twenty-two persons were arrested by the Singapore government under the powers granted by the Internal Security Act, as part of a putative “Marxist conspiracy” ostensibly threatening the state and national interests. Among the political prisoners were two founder-members of the Association of Women for Action and Research (AWARE), a vigorous feminist organization then practicing critique and activism on a variety of fronts.

A number of other founder-members were convinced that they had themselves either narrowly escaped detention, or were yet vulnerable to arbitrary seizure. The government immediately disseminated propaganda justifying the arrests and proceeded to ban or dismantle community activist groups it identified as Marxist- or left-oriented. Shocked, perhaps, into a sense of immediate vulnerability, or possibly convinced of a threat to its legitimacy and survival, AWARE was silent on the arrests, took no stand on the political prisoners, and issued no statements on its imprisoned founder-members. The two women, with the other prisoners, were detained without trial and subjected to physical and psychological abuse. One of them was subsequently rehabilitated, and released after a public confession and renunciation of politics; the other eventually fled to self-exile in the United Kingdom.26

The arrest of its founder-members proved to be a watershed in the self-defined role and activism of AWARE. Created in December 1985 by a group of feminist women whose political opinions ranged from ideological left to liberal center, AWARE, unlike other women’s groups in Singapore, had a reputation for being confrontational and critical, its politics “vociferous.” In recent years, however, AWARE’s public profile has quietly altered, and the organization has come to emphasize community and welfare services to women, rather than critique. Its current commitments include a scheme for loans to women “to prevent women from falling into the hands of loan sharks” (Chau 1992), and a telephone “Helpline” that women can call for advice and counseling on a range of problems, including “marital difficulties,” “issues such as male-female relationships,” “family sexuality, mental health problems, violence against women, work-related issues and medical matters” (AWARE round-up 1993, 39). In 1992, its executive director was quoted as saying that “the association’s main emphasis now is research” (“Winning by Persuasion” 1993), and AWARE’s president in 1992-93 was quoted in a women’s fashion magazine as saying that she preferred the term “woman centredness” to describe her commitment, rather than the term “feminism,” because “feminism is a lonely cause. You are always met with disagreement and disapproval.”

Whatever the organization’s self-definition today, the work that AWARE undertakes is excellent feminist work in the context of Singapore society. Many of the organization’s projects are identifiable if quietly feminist: its Helpline is a version of a battered-women’s emergency hotline; it organizes reading and discussion sessions for children on gender roles, workshops for women on a variety of subjects, support groups, free legal consultation sessions, and a reading circle and film nights to discuss women’s issues. AWARE’s research projects and publications target women in the workplace and childcare facilities, information-gathering on women and health, child education and gender socialization issues, and the generation of feminist literary and discursive materials. In reporting on the organization’s cur-
Among women's groups in Singapore, the government moved to co-opt organizational energies nationally, by constituting, as before, a feminist group of sorts under its own party banner.30 Unlike the fiery manifesto of 1959, however, the PAP's public statement on the Wing details, in no uncertain terms, the subordination of the Wing's semifeudalist interests to the party and party-defined national interests. "The Wing," the Party declared, rather than constituting "a women's lobby group" or "pressure group," would instead "help Singaporean women become better informed about national issues." Chief among its charges would be the duty of "familiarizing members with the PAP philosophy, the role of women in politics, the national budget, health and other issues." ("PAP's Women's Wing" 1992). The year after its inception, the Wing was assigned by the PAP leadership "the task of looking into a proposal to set up a family services centre to coordinate welfare programmes for the needy." ("Women's Wing to Study" 1990). In 1993, Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong, responding to a suggestion that a Women's Affairs Bureau be reestablished in the Party, remarked that such a bureau, if formed, "should not confine itself to tackling women's problems. Instead, it would have to address family and social problems as well." ("Worrying Trends" 1993). The Party today continues to assign a ragbag of duties and tasks to its Women's Wing, most of which, true to the received notions established by the Women's Charter, of what constitutes women's concerns and issues, concentrates on the provision of service to others, notably children, families, and the poor.

In June 1993, two books commissioned by the Women's Wing, addressing the status of women in Singapore, were publicly launched. The texts, one academic and the other popular, offer the most feminist of the Wing's articulated positions on women in Singapore, and perhaps express the extent of what might be hoped for from a government-authorised, state-managed, and party-directed "women's movement" in the Third World. A newspaper article, reporting on the books' contents, mistily notes: "Realities of gender differences are implicitly acknowledged, there is pride in past achievements, hope in looking ahead and a gentle prodding for more attention to be paid to the inequalities and challenges that remain." ("Story of the Singapore Woman" 1993). For all the misty hopefulness palpable in the equating of "inequalities" with "challenges," however, the launching of the books was used, with brutal irony, as an occasion for the current Prime Minister of Singapore to reiterate the accusations directed against women by his predecessor ten years before. Highly educated women, Prime Minister Goh noted pointedly, were still not reproducing babies at a rate adequate to the maintenance of class elites. This, he implied, was a women's issue of the utmost urgency.31 Without any apparent consciousness of insult or irony, or even condescension, the Prime Minister went on to close the issue of gender inequalities in Singapore: "While some differences remained
in the way men and women were treated, such as in the country’s immigration laws, these were products of the largely patriarchal society here and would have to be accepted, he said” (“Worrying Trends” 1993).

The PAP’s attempt to co-opt feminism to subserve the party’s political purposes, state legislation prohibiting registered organizations from activity that might be construed as “political,” even the arrest of individual feminists under the Internal Security Act in Singapore— all these events inscribe relatively dulcet moments in the history and fortunes of Third-World feminism. Saskia Wieringa, charting the history of the Indonesian left-feminist organization Gerakan Warta Indonesia (or GERWANI), a movement whose membership in 1965 comprised 1.5 million people, records the darkest possible fate for institutional feminism in the Third World when she details the organization’s destruction by the Indonesian military government, and the torture, brutalization, and demonization of GERWANI women. Indeed, the array of hazards confronting feminism in the Third World is instructive. Because of the vast instrumentalities that range from preventive or punitive legislation to military or police intervention—and because an institutionalized feminist movement draws attention to itself and appears to the state to possess a capacity, incipient or actual, for the exertion of pressure on national political culture—successful forms of feminism in the Third World have sometimes been informal, unobtrusive, small-scale feminisms. Feminist scholars observe that some of the most effective feminist groups in Southeast Asia—effective in the constituencies of women they reach, their commitment to critical and transformative work, and their empowerment of women at the grassroots level—are often not even registered organizations as such (Heyzer 1986). Many are simply “small groups of women, made up frequently of trusted friends,” though these groups may be “more or less aware of one another” and may “exist within networks” (128).

Organizing women in poor communities, rural villages, plantations, or city squatter areas in Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand, these feminists work with local women in order ultimately to “phase themselves out of . . . leadership positions as the local women become more confident” (128). In a different locality of the Third World, Peruvian feminists have concluded that, as Saskia Wieringa notes, “it is not necessary to join in a large-scale movement . . . you can work in a much more fruitful way in small autonomous groups” (Wieringa 1988).

The relative safety or success of small-scale feminist activism in the Third World should not, however, be overemphasized. In Singapore, from 1982 to 1987, guerilla feminisms of precisely this nature existed: informal collectivities of women supported and aided domestic workers abused by employers, offered legal services in working-class districts to prostitutes and disenfranchised others, conducted social analysis and critique through community theater and drama, met to discuss, educate, critique and transform on a variety of fronts. In many ways, the organization which became AWARE was forged in that critical matrix of repeated, issue-specific, local interventions. Nevertheless, this feminist network of small groups was inexorably dismantled when the Singapore government banned a number of community networks in 1987, in the name of an alleged plot against the state.

No variety of feminism in the Third World, then, is secure from the intervention of the state, nor from the power of any who are able to wield the discourse of nationalism with unchallenged authority. The history of feminism in Singapore, as elsewhere, has been instructive. Rights historically granted to women by patriarchal authority in order to accomplish nationalist goals and agendas do not necessarily constitute acts of feminism, though as practices of power, the granting of such rights may function, both initially and today, to the very real advantage of women. In contrast, rights seized upon and practices initiated by women in the pursuit of their imagined collective interest, even if—like the work of AWARE and others—such practices and acts seem only uncomfortably or unfamiliarly to fit received descriptions of feminism, are indisputably feminist practices. For in Third-World states, ultimately, all feminisms are at risk; all must write their own scripts and plot their continuing survival from moment to moment. It is a profound tribute to feminist resourcefulness and tenacity that varieties of feminism continue to survive and proliferate in the multiple localities of the Third World today.
undercut the historically won benefits of the metropolitan working class. Thus, while moonlighting, overtime, and job-hopping are indications of individual modes of resistance, and of an overall strategy of class mobility, it is these very aspects of workers' choices which support an underground domestic economy which evades or circumvents legal, institutionalized, contractual arrangements that add to the indirect wages of workers.

21. Hossfield, "Their Logic Against Them," p. 149: "You're paid less because women are different than men" or "Immigrants need less to get by."


25. Allen, "Locating Homework."


28. Ibid., p. 41.

29. See Women Working Worldwide, eds., Common Interests.

30. Ibid., p. 38.

31. Ibid., p. 31.


36. Ibid., p. 135.

A Great Way to Go "(Gandhi's Hymn"

2. As a meaningful narrative, nationalism attains much of its emotive power—and considerable oppositional force in independent struggles—by that specific invocation of imagined (or imaginary) relations between land, language, people, and history. The would-be nation is represented, perhaps, as a cherished 'motherland' to be protected and renewed; an essential 'mother tongue' is recovered and promulgated in the cultural sphere; or a selective configuration of womanhood, or traditional 'mother culture,' is posited, then defended, by those who eventually become the 'founders' of the nation (which is subsequently 'born'). Inevitably, the nationalist invocation of discriminate figures problematizes the identity of the 'true' race, of the 'true' people, and of the 'true' language—gendered and sexualized with the feminine being positioned as a crucial foundational term and a resource to be fought over for possession, definition, and control. By way of example, Mitter notes that in Vietnam in 1926, the pro-independence activist Trinh Dinh Ba urged Vietnamese children to "love our country in the same way as we love our mother," adding, "We are born in Vietnam, making Vietnam our Mother Country. Those who keep on referring to France as the Mother Country are really wrong! Only French people can properly call France the Mother Country" (379)."


4. Parija Chatterjee argues convincingly that modernity can be made "consistent with the nationalist project" also through the institution of a principle of selection that separates the "domain of culture into two spheres": a "material" sphere, or public life, where Westernization may be tolerated, and a "spiritual" sphere, constituted mainly as the private, domestic space inhabited and figured by women, where the encroachments of modernity must be warded off, to preserve a traditional national culture (237-39).

5. On the long and complex history of feminism and nationalism in Indonesia, see tortuous and often conflicting, e.g., Veerle de Stuers (1940), and Grenier (1956).

6. Women's groups of other kinds, formed by a tiny minority of English-educated, middle- and upper-middle-class women, also existed in the 1930s. These included a professional association (the Professional Women's Association), a league of votes for women (the Singapore League of Women Voters), and the Singapore Women's Council of 1937, which was initiated by an Italian woman, Sharron Forster. The SCW, under a "committee of fifteen middle-aged wives of wealthy men" (Lim 1984/85, 47) and the dynamic Sharron Forster, appeared without success to the British colonial administration and to local political figures for advocacy on issues such as polygamy, concubinage, and marital-status laws (Lim 1984/85, 46-51).

7. None of these groups had the membership base, the visible appeal, or the capacity for mobilization demonstrated by the nationalist and revolutionary women's groups.

8. Ong, Pang Boon. 1979. "Problems of Past Organization: The Pro-Communist Challenge from Within 1954-57." In People's Action Party: 1934-1979: PAP 45th Anniversary Issue. Singapore: Central Executive Committee People's Action Party, pp. 44-59. Dennis Bloodworth, a British journalist domiciled in Singapore, chronicles his first encounter with the ranks of Communist women thus: "When I attended my first anti-colonial rally in Singapore in 1956, the rows of grim, bespectacled female faces beneath dead straight fringes that could have been chopped with shears had me swivelling nervously in my seat to check the exits" (1986, 100). It is, of course, a cliché of Middle Eastern Orientalist discourse, that Communists and Chinese—like the strongly individualized Western here—are uniformly homogeneous and undifferentiated people, an undiversified "yellow peril," as it were.

9. Chan Choy Sinng Instituted the Women's League in the PAP. In the 1959 General Election, PAP fielded Chan Choy Sinng, Ho Pei Choo, Oh Su Chen, Fong Pei Chee, and Suharri bin Hame, all of whom campaigned on women's issues and were successfully elected in their constituencies. All the Chinese women were Chinese-dialect or Mandarin speakers, able to appeal to the public at a grassroots level, and specifically to women in the majority Chinese-speaking population. Kwa Geok Choo, the wife of the man who became Singapore's first Prime Minister, Lee Kuan Yew, was deployed by the PAP to canvass English-speaking women voters, and made a single speech over Radio Singapore in 1959 on women's issues.

9. By contrast, Article 12 of the Constitution of the Republic of Singapore, in guaranteeing the
discrimination against citizens of Singapore on the ground only of religion, race, descent or place of birth in any law or in the appointment of any office or employment under a public authority or in the administration of any law relating to the acquisition, holding or carrying on of any trade, business, profession, vocation or employment.” Discrimination in employment on the grounds of sex is thus constitutionally legal in Singapore, despite the express declaration of the PAP manifesto of 1959 that “the P.A.P. believes in the principle of equal pay for equal work” (17). A publication of the Singapore Association of Women Lawyers (SAWL) accordingly warns women that “it is not unlawful for a person to refuse to employ you merely on the ground that you are a woman (who may get married, and are already married and have a child or children).” It is also not unlawful for a person to refuse you or refuse to send you for training merely on the ground that you are a woman. Because the law is silent, you have no right to equal pay for equal work” (Legal Status of Singapore Women, 30). Special provisions in the Constitution also secure citizenship status for the children of male Singapore citizens, when the children are born outside Singapore, but not for children of female Singapore citizens, when the children are born outside Singapore, but not for children of female Singapore citizens (Legal Status of Singapore Women, 20).

In contrast to this declaration of 1959, the Prime Minister of Singapore, Goh Chok Tong, quoted in a 1993 newspaper report as saying that “it is neither possible nor wise to have complete equality of the sexes. Some differences between the sexes are a product of the society and would have to be accepted.” The report continues: “The Prime Minister argued that minor areas where women were not treated in the same way as men should be accepted in a largely patriarchal society.” Mr. Goh said that these differences should not be regarded as ‘pockets of discrimination’. Instead, they were ‘anthropological asymmetries’ or products of the society’s traditions. In other words, these differences have to be accepted.” (Worrying Trends) 1993. Goh’s predecessor, Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, in 1982, in an exhibition of distress over falling birth rates among highly-educated elites in Singapore, speculated thoughtfully on the possibility of reintroducing polygamy (i.e., polygyny) as a possible solution (see Heng and Devan 1992, 249).

10. In 1993, theecs of Parliament—a majority of MPs who are formally “nominated” by a majority in Parliament to serve as MPs—were elected, however, a woman, Kamoklon So, a former president of the Association of Women for Action and Research (AWARE) and a dedicated feminist, announced, on acceptance of her nomination, that she would make women’s special constituency her priority. (Henderson 1993).

11. For his unauthorized history of Singapore, Dancing Bloodworth successfully interviewed a handful of former Communist women, whom he mentions by name and sobriquet: Linda Chen (Moke Hock), Sweezea, “Sister Fong,” and the “red Ballewina” (Goh Lay Kuan).

12. Wahid-Jafri Karim, director of the KANITA Project, a women’s studies program in Malaysia, considers AWAS a separate organization from PKMM, assigning the impetus for its creation to the ‘Executive Committee of the MNP’ under its [male] president, Dr. Buhainuddin Helmi. But to AWAS’s core women leaders, Aishah Ghani, Sakinah Jumim, and Samahah Fakih, with “warm support and encouragement from members of the Malay National Party (PKMM)” (Karim 1983, 722). Even by this alternative account of its origin, AWAS would seem to have been a strongly nationalist organization, one that saw feminist advocacy in the context of national responsibilities, as its second president, Samahah Fakih, made plain: “If the women have sufficient amount of grey matter to see and understand the problems of the country and be able to have the capacity to realize the significance of their responsibility; if the world is stepping towards a more stable and sound economic regime, then there is no justification for the notion of women being denied their rights in determining internal and external policies when the consequences of such decisions are to be shouldered by both” (Dancey 1987, 86).

13. Karim has argued that the “phenomenal expansion of the political party system in the pre- and immediate post-independence period” in Malaysia co-opted feminist energies and directed the activism of AWAS, channeling activist women into “formal structures of institutionalized political membership” (Karim 1983, 726) and “government-initiated women’s movements like Wanita Umno and KEMAS” (The People’s Progress Movement). But remain essentially “female functionaries” (722, 728). It is “within the women’s division of the major political parties that feminist leaders attempt to draw attention to women’s issues and rights, though problems relating to sexual discrimination in wages and employment or political underrepresentation are seldom highlighted or seriously discussed. They generally broach topics of women’s welfare, moral and family needs which do not constitute socially acceptable topics in political discourse” (726). The problem of government-sponsored feminism” and women’s groups is discussed below in the context of Singapore.

14. Indeed, much of the Charter extends over what might be called the territory of the sexual: conditions of marriage, separation, and divorce; rights and duties of spouses, the welfare of children, and family and child maintenance; laws pertaining to prostitution, brothels, sex offenses, intercourse with female minors, etc. Nonsexualized items in the Charter include the right to hold, inherit, and alienate property; in a profession, trade, or social activity; to sue and be sued in one’s own name; to enter into contracts on one’s own, etc. Interestingly, in the configuration of feminine identity produced by the Charter, women have the right to retain their personal name and family name after marriage, but the Charter does not protect their right to assign their family name to their children, if so desired. The Registration of Births and Deaths Act, Chapter 427, Section 10, awards only fathers the right to transmit their surname to children born in legal marriage. The Charter’s provisions do not apply, moreover, to Muslim women in Singapore. Marriages, divorces, and inheritance laws for Muslims fall under the purview of the shari’ah courts.

15. On the point of the two books commissioned by the PAP's Women's Wing, typically begins, “Singapore women have it good.” It continues, “Everything changed after the 1961 Women's Charter. . . . In the wake of the adjustments following that legislation, women have enjoyed equal rights in practically every area.” (Story of the Singapore Woman, 1993). While the Women’s Charter was undoubtedly a remarkable document for its time, its institution did not prevent the Singapore government from enacting inequities against women. Among these are: medical benefits for the children born out of wedlock, and female government employees; a quota for medical training at university level which only admits one woman per five men; and altered admission criteria to the National University of Singapore from Singapore in 1983, when it was discovered that, because of superior academic performance, increased numbers of women were being admitted over men to the university.

16. It is well worth repeating that all nationalism tends to require, for their self-description and ideological imperatives, the production and manipulation of feminine identity. Islamic cultural nationalism is no exception: A recent Newsweek article ("The Turks of Muslim Europe") on Islamic cultural nationalism in Europe in the 1990s was typically accompanied by a symbolic photograph of veiled Muslim women in a street market, carrying a banner depicting a veiled woman carrying a placard. In one such example, “Le Hijab” (Le Bonnet) prominently displayed. Back and Keddie (1978, 13) note, in an excellent discussion, that the reproduction of neotraditionalist forms of feminine identity is being negotiated and reconfigured in Muslim’s (1994) impressive study of women in the Islamic world. That the dominance of the veil does not, however, automatically signify a retrogressive subordination of women has been often argued repeatedly by Third-World feminists. For instance the well’s usefulness to Southeast Asian women—Muslim factory workers in Malaysia negotiating new economic, sexual, and social identities—see Ali and Ong 1987, 137 et passim.

17. National carriers in Southeast Asia are typically state-owned, state-managed, or government-linked institutions. PT Garuda Indonesia (related to be privatized in late 1996 or in 1997) is run by the Indonesian Transport Minister and managed by the state; Thai Airways International, Philippine Airlines, and Singapore Airlines are partly privatized, with the government as major or indirect majority shareholder. Until January 1993, the commander-in-chief of the Thai air force was also chairman of Thai Airways International’s board of directors, while the chairman of Singapore Airlines is the current Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of National Development in Singapore.

18. SIA’s annual report for 1990–91, for instance, lamenting the slowdown of the global economy, especially in Australia, North America, and the United Kingdom, and the escalation
tax of $1.16 billion, "down 19.2% from 1989-90" (65). Air traffic to Europe, the Americas, and Australia contributed 64.5% of the airline's income in 1990-91 (69).

20. Reports in the Straits Times have described the molestations as Americans, Germans, British, Austrians, Japanese, and Sri Lankans, holding such occupations as businesswomen, oil riggers, metal workers, divers, supervisors, etc. The sexual abuse of the flight attendants by male passengers has become so notorious a problem that a Straits Times columnist was moved to wonder if it might be "the free flow of liquor" on SIA flights that is responsible for the harassment (Tan 1993).

21. Trong (1990, 179) quotes typical advertising copy for Thai Airways: "Smooth as silk is a beautifully proportioned meal, by a delicious hostess," "Some say it's our beautiful wide-bodied DC-10 that cause so many heads to turn at airports throughout the world. We think our beautiful slim-bodied hostesses have a lot to do with it." A random sampling of print ads in Asian periodicals confirms the directional shift. An Asian ad features a nude woman wrapped in a transparent cape with the colours of the Thai flag. The caption reads "the beauty and softness of our Asian girls ... falling into all the little wrinkles of business travel, just for you." A Pakistan International ad gushes: "Our air hostesses have an unimitic advantage. They begin their training years ahead of others ... in Pakistan, all girls are schooled at home in the art of hospitality." Indeed, not only airlines, but also hotels, restaurant, etc., in Asia would seem to offer the charms of Asian women in advertising that seduces and service simultaneously to the potential consumer. By contrast, advertising for non-Asian airlines may be slightly more diverse in theme. A Qantas print ad features a map of Australia; a Lufthansa ad headlined "We spoil our passengers as much as we spoil our aircraft," depicts a uniformed male flight attendant amusing a little girl, with a glove puppet. Non-Asian airlines, of course, by no means forewarn the exploitation of feminine identity and services, as United Airlines' historically infamous "Fly Me" advertising campaign in the U.S. once attested. More recently, Lauda Air's advertising in a Thai women's magazine, featuring a child marriage in Thailand as a selling point to tempt potential air passengers ("Thai Group Slams Thai Air Ad" 1992).

22. That Western masculinities are, in fact, multiracial and resourceful has historically complicated feminist projects and the critique of antifeminist masculinist rhetoric in the Third World. Yet the debate over the "gender politics of containment and defense" of Muslim women's (1987, 7). The work of Indian feminists, on the manipulation, by British colonialists, of the traditional Hindu practice of sati or widowhood, to support the imperial project in India and imperial promote, is well-documented.

23. Articles in the Malaysian press have mentioned the revisionary work, for instance, of Amin Wadad-Mulhun, an African-American Koranic scholar formerly with the International Islamic University. While claiming to be an exoteric conservative, Wadad forcefully argues that "the most sacred postulates of Islam are universal and non-sexist," and that it is male bias and "corrupt interpretations" in the exegetical tradition that have been responsible for apparent antifeminism in Islam (Isma'il 1990, "A Woman's View"). Here's a strategy, of course, in line with the time-honored history of similar claims by pro-feminism male nationalists in the Middle East such as Qasim Amin (see Phillip 1978, Jerawat 1989, etc). Malay women, as a cause of action, at the University of Texas at Austin, recently reminded me—might also counter the Islamic nationalist charge that feminism is foreign by pointing out that the exegetical tradition in Islam, grounded in the Middle East and Arabians, is itself foreign to Malaysia. By contrast, Norma observes, adat, customary law governing Malay communal life, is indigenous to Malaysia, and is independent of its colonial laws. Often affords Malay women more rights than shar'iah law. That is to say, in Malaysia, Malay ethnic nationalism and pride and the historical continuity of Malay identity are at least potentially in conflict with Malay Islamic nationalism, and might constitute fertile ground for feminists who would support the legal rights and rights of feminism.

24. Interestingly, perhaps inevitably, these heroines—particularly when they are figures from contemporary history—are also often nationalist heroines, and figure in themselves and in their historical status the competitive tension of feminism and nationalism. The strategy of sifting the past for figures, values, and narratives that would serve to provide a legitimizing genealogy for what is essentially a modern movement is, of course, a nationalist strategy as much as a feminist one in the Third World. In the search for an authoritative and investing national past, their histories are told on parallel trajectories.

25. "In the pre-colonial era, indigenous Malay women had a relatively high status, as is generally the case in Southeast Asia. Malay mythology is replete with the legends of queens and maidens, particularly in the pre-Islamic era." (Wrigley 1989, 5).

26. The arrests received worldwide attention from the international human-rights community, from members of the U.S. Congress, and from members of the European Parliament, in part because it was widely believed, both within and outside Singapore, that the government had applied the powers of the Internal Security Act (ISA) against individuals who the authorities believed to be a threat to the state. The government had repeatedly invoked the ISA to detain individuals linked to the pro-communist People's Action Party (PAP). Prior to the 1987 arrests, however, the government had been careful to establish publicly, in each case of arrest, the precise relation between the persons arrested and the Communist underground in Malaysia. Detainees were also typically offered the option of release if they agreed to abjure, in writing, any commitment to violence as a means of political change. By contrast, no mention was made of Communists or the MCP in the 1987 arrests. The government only claimed, confusingly, that the community activists, dramatists, lawyers, student unionists, and feminists arrested were either "Communist" conspirators, the dupes of the Chinese Communist party, or both simultaneously, and none was offered release in exchange for abjuring the violent overthrow of the government. The two-funder members of the Singapore People's Action Party, including Leong Seng Yan, were the women detained (this round of political detentions were remarkable also in that more women than men were arrested) were also members of AWARE.

27. "Violence is the label 'feminist' frighten many people. People see feminists as ugly, ugly, and single. We are single, the term 'woman-centred', AWARE believes that men and women should work together, not see themselves as battlegrounds. Feminism is not an anti-man's standpoint." (Sani 1991, 102).

28. While registered societies in Singapore are required to restrict their activity to the non-pro- particular, individual women associated with these organizations have sometimes been able to and Constance Singham, past presidents of AWARE and the Singapore Council of Women's Organisations (SCWO), have written together to the national press on the issue of race; and Anahim Tan, an associate professor of AWARE, has conducted research on transnational migrant domestic labor in her academic work as an author; and the press threatening the government (unfortunately without success) to require standardized legal contracts for the protection of foreign domestic workers in Singapore.

29. The Singapore government is, of course, unique in thus arrogating to itself the powers voiced about the difficulties social and economic situation (of economically disadvantaged groups). Nor is AWARE unique, as a feminist NGO, in seeking broad support for their antifeminist subscribing positions, as much of the political-social conditions in which it finds itself. A recent academic study observes that the democratic freedoms of "free speech and association" by leading Western NGOs have been largely ignored by the government that has tended to take a less active role in controversial issues such as prostitution and instead concentrates on such immediate action as helping rape victims" (Tan 1991).
women and has directed efforts at educating women on their rights under the law; and the Singapore Council of Women’s Organisations (SCWCO), founded in 1940, and representing thirteen-and-eight groups and societies, with a total of close to 100,000 members. Because the SCWCO is an umbrella body for a diversity of interests, however—member organisations include religious groups, a travel club, business and professional associations, school-alumni groups, government-affiliated organisations, and a needle club—much of the SCWCO’s direct action at this point of time is necessarily dependent upon its immediate leadership. In recent years, under presidents Constance Singarc and Amnah Tan, the SCWCO has had a palpably feminist cast.

31. Unlike his predecessor, former Prime Minister Lee, however, Goh nominally soft-pedaled the eugenic equation. Although Goh tactfully observed that “[women with no formal schooling] produced 2.5 times as many children as those with tertiary qualifications in 1970. The ratio went up to 2.8 in 1940 and 2.9 last year” ("Worrying Trends"), he nonetheless added as a concession, “Do not get me wrong. I am not saying that the less-educated women should have fewer children. It is a question of balance. If the ratio was one to one, or even one to two, it would not be a problem.” The newspaper report went on to say that Goh “warned that this imbalance was significant as talented people were needed to help create jobs for the less educated.”

32. According to one of the two volumes produced by the PAP’s Women’s Wing, Singapore ranks forty-fourth among ninety-nine countries in a study on the status of women around the world conducted by the Population Crisis Committee in Washington, D.C. (Wong and Leong 1993: 10). This places Singapore after Hong Kong (third-twenty-fifth), Japan (eighty-fourth), and Taiwan (thirty-ninth) in the treatment of female citizens, but, as the editors take the trouble to note, before the other countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Pakistan and Bangladesh.

33. These groups EMPOWER, Friends of Women (FOW), and the Women’s Information Centre (WIC) of the Foundation for Women (FFW), for instance, are small-scale and dynamic, as scholars have noted. EMPOWER’s work, in supporting and authorizing the most disenchanted and alienated of women in Thai society—prostitutes, including children—through drama, education projects, self-help activities, and even a newsletter, is particularly impressive (Bandra and Pandey 1991).

34. Since June 1993, a number of fine studies by Deniz Kandiyoti (1994), Rajeswari Mohan (1994), and others have appeared in print, theorising Third-Wold feminism along trajectories similar to or divergent from the trajectory I outline above. I have learned much from this body of work, and from the lively, interrogative, and very diverse graduate students who participated in my 1993 seminar at the University of Texas on international feminisms.

Works Cited in Chapter 2

"Abusive Bosses Will Be Barred from Hiring Maids: Move to Punish Errant Employers, Says Ministry," Straits Times (Singapore), August 7, 1990, p. 3.


Notes to Chapter 3

1. The title is inspired by Angela Carter's postholocaust love story Heroes and Villains, published by Heinemann in 1969.

2. This essay does not address practices defined as cultural, medical, or cosmetic (for example, clitoridectomy, infibulation, scarification), but focuses on rape and other sexual and physical assaults inflicted on women by men against their will, in both the private and public spheres.

3. The tragedy of Sannie Baartman's life and the violence done to her even after her death have been noted for their sexual fetishism. The otherworldly practices involv'd other sexual and physical assaults inflicted on women by men against their will, in both the private and public spheres.

4. The protective/defensive measures are related to the subject women subjected to violence by men方式进行 regular vaginal examinations and confinement for treatment (by force if necessary). The colonization of the African continent by foreign powers led to the introduction of these practices. It is the cost of treating African women identified as prostitutes who were deemed prohibitive, so only the colonial forces were offered treatment.

5. The widespread impact of AIDS on Ugandan society must be one of the reasons for such stringent measures being introduced. It remains to be seen how effectively they will be implemented and whether they will function as a deterrent.


