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House, Home and Homeland

Carole Pateman, University of California, Los Angeles
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I would like to begin with an observation about Iris Marion Young's legacy. She has set us very high standards. Her approach to justice was far from the Rawlsian notion that the way to proceed is to consider what principles we would agree to if we were in some ideal, hypothetical situation. She was concerned with the here and now: What does justice ask of us in a very unequal, unjust, and hardly democratic world? She insisted that justice has exacting requirements. She questioned "the common intuition that the moral claims of justice ought not to be too demanding on individuals" (2004, 383). As members of the privileged rich part of the world's population, we have a responsibility to do all that we can to further justice, but she also argued that the oppressed too should do whatever they could. She wanted us to get out of our academic offices, at least sometimes, into the real world — and, unusually, she did so. She practised what she preached.

In *Justice and the Politics of Difference* Young wrote: "My personal political passion begins with feminism" (1990, 13). It was not until I was asked to participate in this tribute that it struck me how little attention has been paid to her specifically feminist work in political theory, in particular, to her essays on embodiment; justice for women requires that we be taken seriously as embodied beings. Discussion has focused on Young's arguments that can be fitted into neatly circumscribed debates about, for example, multiculturalism. Not surprisingly, few of our colleagues are likely to embrace discussions of menstruation, pregnancy,

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breasts, and the manner in which girls throw things. In the conventional view of political theory, these matters lie well outside its purview: The messy and disorderly reality of women's bodies sits too uneasily with the measured and abstract discourse of mainstream political theory.

Along with the big questions, such as justice, the welfare state, humanitarian intervention, or global citizenship, Young was not afraid to refer to the intimate processes of her own body. She also tells us that her mother did not do housework and that after her father died her mother started drinking, which led to the children being labeled as neglected and removed from their home. Her mother was twice arrested. She writes of this in what she calls an "Interlude" in "House and Home: Feminist Variations on a Theme" (in [1997], 2005). I want to look at this essay together with a more recent piece, "The Logic of Masculinist Protection: Reflections on the Current Security State" (2003).

Young does not refer to her earlier essay about house and home when writing about the security state but, instead, turns to the question of our homeland; we now have a Department of Homeland Security. She warns us against the nationalist projection of an idealized conception of home onto a romanticized homeland. Feminists have long been conscious of women's ambiguous relationship to homelands. In 1797, Mary Wollstonecraft asked in her novel *Maria* "if women have a country" (1994, 92). Her question was echoed between the two world wars by Virginia Woolf in *Three Guineas*. What, Woolf wonders, can patriotism mean to a "step-daughter of England," and she declares that "as a woman, I have no country" ([1938] 1966, 9, 14, 109). Feminists have, of course, also been very critical of the lack of security and comfort in the home for women and children; all too often they are deprived and terrorized. But perhaps because of, rather than despite, the events of her childhood, Young nevertheless concludes "House and Home" by arguing that home embodies important liberating values, values that should be extended universally.

Young examines the arguments of a number of different theorists (Martin Heidegger, Luce Irigaray, Simone de Beauvoir), sorts through them, and teases out what is useful in each. Much housework, she agrees, is mere drudgery, but nonetheless we should not merely dismiss the value that many women place on homemaking. Creating and preserving a home provides us with meaning and with identity; changing events and relationships in the home are given a meaningful history through acts of preservation. During the course of her argument, she considers some recent feminist rejections of the value of home on the

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grounds that the home contains and reinforces a fixed, bounded identity that excludes all those seen as different and alien. Clearly, this interpretation of home is close to nationalist views of the homeland; it is, so to speak, the latter in miniature. Young, too, rejects such conceptions, but she argues that there is a radical potential in the values of home, values that are kept out of the reach of millions of poor people around the world today. So she concludes that we should reject home as a privilege of the global North and that its values should be democratized.

She singles out four values. 1) Safety: multitudes of poor people, as well as women and children, experience violence in their homes. 2) Individuation: to have a proper existence, individuals require a home, a space they can call their own. 3) Privacy: others should not have access to the individual's private space or her person without her consent. (She argues that it is not only Western cultures that value privacy in this sense). 4) Preservation: home provides a secure space in which to collect and safeguard the things in which the stories of one's life are embodied.

When Young turns from the home to the security state, she does not argue in terms of these values, although she uses the model of the home to illuminate the state. One way of summing up the values of home would be that they encompass security or protection. Inhabitants would be protected in a home built on these values. It could be argued that the values apply also to the homeland: It offers its members safety, a territory (space) that is its occupants' own, and privacy, which could be glossed as autonomy; finally, it preserves the story of a collective life. But as many feminist scholars have demonstrated, "protection" is all too often a euphemism for subordination and domination. When Young examines the logic of protection in the security state, it is hardly accidental that she uses the model of the patriarchal household in which the male head "protects" his women and children, his subordinates.

She invokes two contrasting images of masculinity. One is a dominant, aggressive figure, a sexual predator, who bonds with other men to enforce their superiority over women. Women need protection against such aggressors, and the figure who steps in is a milder, gallant man who shields women from the predators. He is the protector who provides the members of his household with a secure haven. His rule is masked by love so that a feminine woman can love her protector and "look up to him with gratitude for his manliness and admiration for his willingness to face the dangers of the world for her sake" (Young [2003] 2007, 121). This is the protective model, but she argues that today the logic of

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masculinist protection is more illuminating about the relationship of the security state to citizens than about private life.

Young discusses various aspects of the development of the security state since 9/11, but I want to focus on her use of Thomas Hobbes. As she notes, Hobbes is the great theorist of political power as protection. She presents him as a theorist of authoritarian rule, and she also refers to "the authoritarian security paradigm" that resembles the relationship of the masculine protector to his household ([2003] 2007, 125). At a time when state officials rely heavily upon the mobilization of fear and when a population is faced with what is portrayed as an all-pervasive threat, patriotism can operate like gratitude in the household and citizens willingly embrace subordination. Introducing her argument, Young states that the "protection bargain between the state and its citizens is not unique to the United States in this period, but rather often legitimates authoritarian government" ([2003] 2007, 119).

In the concluding section, she contrasts the authoritarian security state with a democratic relationship between a state and its citizens. This contrast is, however, less sharp than Young suggests. The exchange of obedience for protection is not only the legitimating principle of authoritarian government but also the legitimating principle of the modern (constitutional, liberal-democratic) state. Hobbes is one of the theorists of an original contract, and he is particularly revealing about the ramifications of protection, but all the theorists of an original contract, save for Jean-Jacques Rousseau, tell a similar story. The stories are about the exchange of obedience for protection. The point of an original contract or, more precisely, the point of the *social* contract, is to justify the government of citizens by the modern state. Individuals give up the right to govern themselves and agree (are said to agree) that representatives, or the Leviathan in the case of Hobbes, should govern for them. That is to say, they agree to obey the decisions made by representatives and officials of the state, and in return they receive the protection of the laws and of the armed might of the state.

Most political theorists do not see the relationship between state and citizen in terms of masculinist protection because they see the original contract in one-dimensional terms as the social contract. The logic of masculinist protection is laid bare not in the social contract but in another dimension of the original contract, in the sexual contract that justifies (is said to justify) the government of women by men in both private and public life (Rousseau enthusiastically endorsed the sexual contract). Again, obedience is exchanged for "protection," and the same

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logic structures the third dimension of the original contract, the racial contract (Mills 1997; Pateman 1988; Pateman and Mills 2007).

A widespread assumption in contemporary political theory, unlike early modern theory, is that there are no questions to be asked about the legitimacy of the modern state. In discussions of political obligation, for instance, the problem is taken to be to show which are the best justifications; no doubts are raised about whether political obligation can actually be justified. But feminists should be much more skeptical about masculinist logic and protection. Young argues that democratic citizenship "means ultimately rejecting the hierarchy of protector and protected" ([2003] 2007, 138). Such a rejection has radical implications. It rejects the original contract of obedience and protection, and the contract through which the power structures, including sexual and racial hierarchies, of the modern state are (said to be) justified, along with the fundamental premise that individuals should always (be supposed to) give up their right of self-government.

As part of the contrast between an authoritarian security state and democratic citizenship, Young calls on Judith Stiehm's argument that to overthrow the protector/protected relationship requires that it be replaced by the position of "defender" and that citizens both govern and defend themselves; there is "an ideal of equality in the work of defense" ([2003] 2007, 138). What this might mean is hard to envisage as the security state increases its power. Hobbes believed that only Leviathan could bring peace, but where is the evidence that the security state brings peace rather than war? If homes are to be places of peace and security for all who live in them and homelands are to exist in secure cooperation rather than as aggressive competitors and enemies, we should take seriously, and extend to a larger canvas, Young's values of home.

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