

Prof.Cohn, like Nobel, is working for disarmament. Like Bertha von Suttner, she is concerned with demasking language, showing the thinking behind the military mindset. What will this thinking lead to? (200 characters with spaces)

As a feminist antimilitarist Prof. Carol Cohn, (born 1949), from the University of Massachussets, has performed pioneering research on the language used by researchers on nuclear strategies. She found that the “nuclear security discourse” is highly unrealistic and irrational. She was surprised that anyone could seriously talk about “fighting and winning” a nuclear war, as if a nuclear war was something that could be controlled and won. It all seemed wildly irrational to Cohn.

Therefore, she decided to spend a year as a colleague of a group of nuclear defense intellectuals, on the whole male civilians, moving between administrative jobs, advisers, research in universities or think tanks. Cohn’s discoveries on the real, but hidden, implications of their language and imagery were then dissected in the article "Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defense Intellectuals". [The article was](#) published in 1987 in *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*.^{12 (4)} She found that the discourse in the group of defense intellectuals was permeated with sexual subtext, extensive use of abstract language and euphemisms. An article on the same topic was published the same year in the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientist*. She has followed up this groundbreaking research in many articles and chapter of books over the last thirty years.

The term "collateral damage" served to cover from view that large numbers of innocent people would die. Cohn found their language smart, playful, and colorful, often sexualized, on vertical "erector launchers", "thrust to weight ratios", "soft lay downs", "deep penetration", and "orgasmic whumps". The language served to distance these defense professionals from the deadly reality of nuclear war; the terms prevented people from outside from participating. In her articles Cohn provides a both chilling and alarming insight into the seriously flawed world of nuclear thinking and decision-making: In an attachment I give an excerpt from the article in *Signs*. (1997 characters with spaces)

Attachment

From: Cohn,Carol (1987)Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defense Intellectuals. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*.12 (4)

A similar article was published in *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* in June 1987 under the title: Slick'ems, Glick'ems, Christmas Trees and Cookie Cutters: Nuclear Language and how we learnt to Pat the Bomb.

The first thing that was absolutely stunning to me was that learning the language was fun. Not only was it fun, but it also felt good in other ways. It made me feel like I was a member of an elite secret society and it even made me feel more in control. Controlling the language, mastering it, *I felt I was somehow also controlling the nuclear weapons themselves*. The most disturbing aspect of having acquired linguistic competence in technostrategic language only became apparent, however, when I started to use this new competence to ask questions and have conversations. After a brief period of simply feeling relieved that I could actually hold up my end of the conversation, I suddenly realized that I was in a closed system, and there was no way to use the language to ask about the things I really care about or state my own ideas. There was no way to talk of human suffering and if you dared utter a foreign word like “peace” you immediately marked yourself as soft, feminine, unrealistic, not expert. [Italics added].

The Norwegian Nobel Institute <no-reply@nobel.no>

Fri 2021-01-15 18:50

To:

Birgit Brock-Utne;

Your nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize 2021 has been successfully submitted.

The Norwegian Nobel Committee appreciate your effort in making this nomination.

If you wish to make another nomination please log on to:

<https://nominations.nobelpeaceprize.org>

Kind regards,

The Norwegian Nobel Institute