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Why Critical Military Studies Needs to Smash White Supremacist Capitalist Heteropatriarchy: A Rejoinder

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In my article 'Problematizing military masculinity, intersectionality and male vulnerability in feminist critical military studies' (2017), I outline some of the innovations in previous research on military masculinity, its plural and more broad formation as militarised masculinities; and some of the new, yet limited, directions of research which pays attention to gender in studies of militarised individuals and communities. In particular, I draw on the work of Crenshaw (1989, 1991), one of the founding Black feminist scholars amongst others, of concept of intersectionality, in order to share my increasing anxiety with what I argued is a process of depoliticisation in Critical Military Studies (CMS). However, to call this depoliticisation is itself problematic. What I should have argued is that this is rather a *re-politicisation* and *reinforcement* of racial, gender and class hierarchies both inside and outside of formal militaries *and* within and across a range of academic disciplines. This is evident in the superficial engagement with intersectionality by some military masculinity scholars *or* the use of intersectionality in what Carbado (2013) calls 'colour-blind' ways which 'cover over' privilege¹ through the co-optation of a radical and emancipatory body of theories for examining 'multiple differences' and which I discuss in more detail (Henry 2017). Scholars who use intersectionality as a framework for challenging *interlocking* oppressions and those primarily interested in the *interface* or the *mutually constituting* nature of masculinities and militarisation, may be engaged in different epistemic and political projects. Yet, it is surprising that the feminist inspiration introduced by Enloe in the concept of military masculinity (1983), seems to have waned in regard to paying attention to constructions of femininity; femininities and patriarchy (Enloe 2017). There is a scholarship which pays attention to women in the military, military femininities and female military masculinities (i.e. Sasson-Levy 2015; Tasker 2002), but this work remains marginal within the subfield of militarised masculinities. Has the potential for critical perspectives within CMS been extinguished by a focus on military masculinity without feminism? Without intersectional feminism? While the subfield of militarised masculinities has been innovative in taking gender seriously in the context of male-dominated institutions, I ask, where are studies of military masculinity that focus on the persistence of patriarchy (Enloe 2017) and militarised femininities as a subject in their own right?

While work on Israeli military identities raises a number of questions about intersectionality's limits, it is evident that the burden of analysing gender (and its intersection with other axes of difference) remains with feminist critical military scholars. This burden has already been complicated by including categories such as sexuality, femininity, and whiteness (Hartal & Sasson-Levy 2017; Lomsky-Federer & Sasson-Levy 2015, 2017; Sasson-Levy 2013). However, I argue that militarised masculinities cannot afford to

¹ An interesting example is an article by Coston and Kimmel (2012) which challenges monolithic understandings of privilege, but pays little attention to the racialised foundations upon which intersectionality was developed.

neglect feminist theories and concepts and must engage in the project of smashing what bell hooks refers to as *white supremacist capitalist heteropatriarchy* (hooks 2009). This means that military/militarised masculinities could return to the critical and radical basis of intersectionality, the lived experiences of those communities referred to by such concepts, or the normative project for which intersectionality is the daily bread: black feminism (i.e. Combahee River Collective 1977; Lorde 1984; hooks 1984; Collins 1986). While my article was cynical about the growing epistemic commodification of intersectionality more generally, I am hopeful for new scholarship in the subfield. Recent studies of militarised masculinities demonstrate hope for a radical transformation of the existing gendered, classed and racial global order by politicising which and when differences matter; why inequalities persist; and where military men and women are not equally positioned or privileged. Some examples of this work include Richter-Monpetit 2016; Barkawi 2017; Burnett and Milani 2017; Ingelaere and Wilén 2017; Chisholm 2017; Partis-Jennings 2017; Zalewski 2017; and Myrtilinen (forthcoming) 2018. This work is situated within new epistemic assemblages which challenge the gendered, racial and/or neoliberal systems of oppression by both paying homage to the work of critical, radical and political scholarship on heterosexism, colonialism and capitalism (Ahmed 2015), or by simply taking up the task of smashing. There is no better moment for CMS scholars to do the same.

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