## \*\*Kritik Answers\*\*

### 2AC – Fem IR – FW

#### Debating the internal dynamics of NATO addresses a key gap in the archive of feminist scholarship – rejoinder is a pre-requisite to effective analysis

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Taking a feminist approach to NATO also addresses a key gap in the field. It provides a cornerstone to addressing Enloe’s (1993: 203) concerns that: We [feminist scholars] know all too little about the internal cultural dynamics of institutions such as NATO. This ignorance prevents us as analysts of internationalized political culture from determining whether and how genuinely new concepts of ‘enemy’, ‘threat’, and ‘security’ are trickling through the alliance’s bureaucratic layers. Nor can we tell how (I don’t believe we need an ‘if’) these possible cultural transformations are reshaping NATO’s own gendered culture. We need feminist anthropologists to imagine their ‘field’ as lying inside NATO’s Brussels headquarters.

While we imagine our ‘field’ as lying inside NATO, from the outset of this project we have been aware of the challenges of doing this. In particular, in gaining access to an institution necessarily steeped in secrecy given its role in international security and defence. Our unique scholar-practitioner authorial partnership has helped us to better imagine NATO. For example, Gil Ruiz’s expertise as the former Chief of the Gender Advisor Office International Military Staff (IMS), including responsibility for supporting the organisation of the NCGP Annual Conferences from 2012 to 2015, has provided invaluable in-depth insight. This has equipped us with a working knowledge of the NCGP from an ‘insider’ perspective, something academic ‘outsiders’, even with privileged access to the institution can never fully ‘know’. This synergy of practitionerscholar perspectives offers a novel understanding of NATO and its engagement with gender, one that is unique within the current literature.

#### Engaging NATO is valuable – studying its internal dynamics is NOT endorsement – BUT, avoids co-option AND oversimplification

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Feminist knowledge of NATO is integral to addressing these questions. The study of an institution does not have to correlate with an endorsement of their politics and practices (Holmes et al., 2019). It is possible to remain a ‘critical friend’. A concept we introduce in the introduction to this book. This builds on the work of Rech et al. (2015: 56) who contend

that the study of the military, of militarism, and of processes of militarisation, should not be undertaken solely for its own sake, but should also by guided by the possibility of engagement with the forces and institutions responsible, and should not be bashful about doing so.

This is because such institutions, including NATO, are ultimately accountable to the civilian world and understanding how they function is necessary to critique them (rather than dismiss them) (Enloe, 1993; Rech et al., 2015: 56). Being a ‘critical friend’ means adopting a critical approach which calls these institutions into question and accounts for the possibility of change, supporting a normatively guided approach (Cox, 1981: 129–30). It entails engaging in complex and nuanced arguments and situating these in broader political considerations and in more nuanced ways than simplistic ‘pro-military’ or ‘anti-military’ positions are able to accommodate (Rech et al., 2015: 56; Duncanson, 2013). It means a commitment to praxis, which necessities engagement. Military institutions are often secretive, complex and contradictory, this means critical agendas can be vulnerable to co-option (as we go on to discuss in Chapter 4). Being a ‘critical friend’ therefore necessitates engaging in a process of reflexivity throughout the research process.

For Cohn (2011: 585), feminist scholars at the epicentre of ‘military/political/economic power’ in Europe and the United States have a responsibility to build knowledge of them. Basu finds there is also space to build knowledge of institutions from multiple-sites to enrich our understanding of how they function (Holmes et al., 2019). Drawing on her research on the UN Security Council, she asks feminist scholars to consider ‘what does the Council look like from different parts of the world?’ (Holmes et al., 2019). The same question could be asked of NATO given its shift to become a globally engaged actor post-Cold War. Thomson (2018: 6) argues that the engagement of such institutions with the WPS agenda necessities building feminist knowledge of them. She is right, however, this should not be the only impetus for such a move. Building feminist knowledge of how institutions such as NATO function is imperative to support the transformation of the current global order in line with gender just goals.

Feminist knowledge building of international institutions becomes all the more necessary for critical feminist IR as a project if we conceive of IR and international relations as co-constitutive. In leaving the study of institutions such as NATO to ‘mainstream’ IR scholars, we neglect the possibilities for change and resistance in the international system. The existing global order, of which NATO is part, is gendered, racialised and classed. In order to transform it, we need to politicise ‘which and when differences matter; why inequalities persist; and where military women and men are not equally recognised, positioned or privileged’ (Henry, 2018: 2).

### 2AC – Fem IR – Perm

#### Over-deterministic interpretations of institutional co-option are insufficient – specifical institutional analysis is key to avoid essentialism

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In a military context, hegemonic masculinity has been used to explain why it is that the creation of the ‘New Man’ (for example, the heroic peacekeeper, the humanitarian soldier scholar) has not resulted in gender equality or for that matter, genuine peace and security on many military interventions. Yet, perhaps the utility of the concept leads to too hasty conclusions in feminist scholarship; NATO as an institution to the automatic assumption that change in masculinities is little more than the ‘flexibility of the machinery of rule’ (Duncanson, 2013: 71). Duncanson offers an important note of caution on the negative connotations of appropriation, change and transformation of hegemonic masculinity, stating that it is too deterministic. She argues that ‘there is nothing in the concept itself which necessitates an interpretation that it always inevitably shifts in order that men retain power; that it can never be transformed, dismantled’ (Duncanson, 2013: 63).

Connell and Messerschmidt argue that research on hegemonic masculinity ‘needs to give much closer attention to the practices of women and to the historical interplay of femininities and masculinities’ (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005: 848). To do so, it is necessary to centralise interaction of women and men, of masculinities and femininities in and through specific institutional practices. In doing so, we provide examples of understanding the construction of particular hegemonic and subordinate masculinities and femininities within NATO. It is therefore necessary to avoid essentialism, and assumed (negative) types, while acknowledging the fluidity and hybridity between masculinities and femininities. Hegemonic masculinity therefore remains a valuable theoretical and analytical tool, particularly when applied to a militarised institutional setting such as NATO.

#### Perm solves – transition does NOT entail complete rejection NOR embrace of hybrid masculinities – solves any residual link

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There therefore remain possibilities to displace hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2005; Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). Even if these possibilities have been lost in application empirical case studies. As Duncanson (2015: 244) argues, to realise this, ‘hierarchical relations must be replaced with relations of equality, mutual respect, or empathy’. She critiques Connell’s (2002) suggestion that the transition phase should be one where a masculinity open to equality within women is hegemonised. Rather, the transitory stage has to be one where traditionally disparaged, feminized traits are newly valued and incorporated into ‘softer’ or hybrid masculinities.

The forging of more equal relations is the ultimate, more challenging stage. The hybrid stage may make it more likely that relations of equality, mutual respect, empathy, and so on, are formed, however, so rather than dismiss the New Man syndrome in all its contexts, assuming it always camouflages the continuation of patriarchy, militarism, and neoliberalism, we can look to expose its contradictions and to push for those relations of equality.

### 2AC Fem IR AT: Vulnerability

#### Vulnerability fails – doesn’t adress material inequalities, sidelines communities who choose protection, and victim blames those who refuse their method

**Cole 16** (Alyson Cole, Queens College and the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, “All of Us Are Vulnerable, But Some Are More Vulnerable than Others: The Political Ambiguity of Vulnerability Studies, an Ambivalent Critique”, A Journal of Philosophy and Social Theory, Volume 17, 2016 - Issue 2: The Politics of Vulnerability, 7/2/16, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14409917.2016.1153896>) // EL

Dynamics of transvaluation

Resignifying vulnerability requires a somewhat different approach than other feminist efforts to elevate and promote previously devalued concepts and ways of being, such as care-giving. The fundamentally negative connotations associated with vulnerability cannot be simply inverted. Scholars endeavour to recast vulnerability as a primary condition of trans-subjectivity that goes much further beyond the potential to be injured. Gilson, for example, argues that “vulnerability is not, essentially, about suffering … nor is it … merely a way of being susceptible to harm.”23 In her formulation, the reflexive association of vulnerability with harm is responsible for the privatization of responsibility. To avoid this impediment she argues that we must revise our conception of vulnerability in at least two ways – from fixity to potentiality, and from negativity to ambiguity.24

Might vulnerability scholars be overstating their case? As a prerequisite for addressing injustice and inequality, they insist that we must first recognize our constitutive vulnerability. However, acknowledging vulnerability, now redefined as a universal condition encompassing beneficial possibilities (intimate relationships, for instance), could in fact prevent us from clearly perceiving what differentiates our vulnerability from the vulnerability of others. Emphasizing vulnerability as “potentiality,” moreover, obscures the (temporal) distinction between a general susceptibility to harm and the actual injuries that specific individuals and communities already endure. Grappling with prospective harm, we may well elide entrenched disparities of dominance and inequality that produce enduring, negative vulnerabilities.

How we experience our common condition of vulnerability differs greatly (who is more sickly, who is more impoverished). This is a structural matter as well as an experiential one. People are subjected to or immunized from vulnerability in radically distinct, different and unequal ways. Given the structural differentiation in who suffers which vulnerabilities, our ontological commonality takes us only so far. While accepting the vulnerability we all share, uncovering its enabling aspects, and perhaps even cultivating “epistemic vulnerability,” are worthy undertakings; the vulnerabilities that demand our urgent attention are those that deepen inequality and inflict harm.

Furthermore, as these scholars ask us to embrace a more expansive understanding of vulnerability, they still preserve and frequently employ the conventional and narrower use of the term “vulnerable” as a designation of harm and oppression. Such ambiguity is not incidental but intrinsic to their project. Retaining the now-doubled meaning of the term, scholars insist on basic, inescapable principles that are shared by all permutations of vulnerability. They semantically re-situate vulnerability-as-harm in a significantly richer range of human interactivity, thereby naturalizing its presence and disarming the potential threat that intensifies social divisions and propels the pursuit of invulnerability. Upholding vulnerability-as-harm and the more inclusive vulnerability-as-interconnectivity under a single designation, however, exacerbates the risk of conflating the two. Such linguistic slippage, which the literature actually encourages, becomes ever more problematic when scholars accentuate the positive, generative dimensions of our susceptibility or openness to others. In this way, transvaluing vulnerability could unintentionally muddle and occlude its negative effects.

Some vulnerability scholars anticipate this criticism, at least implicitly, and offer refinements through adjectival modifiers. Derek Sellman refers to those who are “more-than-ordinarily vulnerable,” for instance, although the principle of differentiation among gradations of vulnerability remains tenuous.25 Butler, to give another example, distinguishes between ontological and situational vulnerability; in other words, between the vulnerability that is a condition of life (precariousness) and the vulnerabilities that are embedded in specific structures of power (precarity).26 Mackenzie et al. go further and construct a taxonomy that separates inherent, situational and pathogenic vulnerabilities.27 Still, the criteria for distinguishing and the relationship between various forms of vulnerabilities are undertheorized.

More importantly, promoting an exceedingly expansive conception of vulnerability and, concurrently, rigidly differentiating its numerous manifestations, seems contradictory. Such taxonomies have the potential of generating new binaries and hierarchies. Perhaps this is why Fineman refuses to parse vulnerability. She acknowledges that vulnerabilities vary qualitatively and quantitatively, but focuses instead on the resources (physical, human, social, environmental and existential) which an individual controls.28 “Designating only certain individuals and groups as vulnerable,” she warns, “transforms our shared vulnerability into a personal liability and renders the individuals so designated susceptible to alienation, stigma, or demonization.”29 Conceiving of “differently vulnerable” subjects, Fineman considers a ruse of liberalism attached to the vulnerable/invulnerable binary: “The most pernicious effect of the segmenting of a general population so that only some are designated as vulnerable … is that such segmentation suggests that the rest of us are not vulnerable.”30 Like Fineman, the field as a whole seems more invested in presenting vulnerability as being foremost universal, always ambivalent and ambiguous, at a distance from questions of power and politics. The concept has been rendered so broad as to obscure the needs of specific groups and individuals, undermining its promise as a conceptual frame to understand and challenge systemic inequalities.

Just as the relationship between different vulnerabilities requires further explication, so too does the trajectory from acknowledging constitutive vulnerability to identifying and remedying concrete inequalities and injustice. “It remains unclear,” as Murphy observes of Butler's discussion about how vulnerability can fuel both violence and a politics of nonviolence, “what norms would be at play in an attempt to derive a substantive ethics (or politics) from a constitutive and primordial exposure to others.”31 Similarly, as she promotes epistemic and other forms of vulnerability, Gilson also points to specific cases in which individuals and communities might rightly reject cultivating vulnerability and instead pursue closure as a protective posture to resist oppression. She claims that this sort of vulnerability management differs from valorizing invulnerability because it is strategic and selective. “[O]ne does not ignore and deny vulnerability per se, but refuses the experience of vulnerability in particular cases.”32 What would be the general principle to guide us in determining whether to be more or less vulnerable? How would the line between what is strategic and what is constitutive be determined? As an effort to advance an ethical posture towards political questions (I will return to this point later) vulnerability studies provide largely a pre-ethical premise, as Murphy suggests. Beyond general allusions to injustice and inequality we need to rely on supplemental approaches, ethical or otherwise, for any clear course of action.

Several scholars propose that thinking of vulnerability as a spectrum on which we all occupy different places at different times would alter the frames of intelligibility (in Butler's account), and address the a priori disavowal of the “more-than-ordinarily vulnerable” (to use Sellman's phrase). “If we came to terms with the fact that we are all, by definition, characterized by vulnerability,” Carine Mardorossian avers, “then it becomes difficult (if not impossible) to hold it against people that they are vulnerable.”33 Is such optimism merited? Do we discipline the vulnerable primarily because of a failure to recognize our shared condition and the potentialities it enables? Or, is it instead that the mistreatment of the most vulnerable derives from a more substantial and complex investment in systems of power and material benefits? This was William Ryan's point in his examination of policies designed during the late 1960s to address urban poverty, crime and violence in the United States. Rather than focus on structural, economic factors that produce and perpetuate vulnerability, these well-meaning policymakers found fault instead with the behaviour and values of vulnerable populations, and designed policies to reform them. Such twisted logic Ryan provocatively called “blaming the victim.” According to Ryan, victim blaming emerges from “systematically motivated, but unintended, distortions of reality … rooted in a class-based interest in maintaining the status quo.”34 Furthermore, he demonstrated that it is precisely those who are especially receptive to vulnerable others who end up blaming them. In a “sub-conscious reconciliation” of opposing self-interests and humanitarian “impulses,” these otherwise empathic individuals attribute responsibility to the vulnerable for their condition in order to justify the current socioeconomic structures that privilege them as members of capitalist society's elites.35 The obstacle, in other words, is material and psychological more than epistemological.

Relatedly, the question remains in what way vulnerability studies could facilitate interventions or remedies to inequality that are substantially different from those already available. Fineman, for instance, aims with her “vulnerable subject” to impart an alternative heuristic to compel governmental and legal responsiveness. Her criticisms of the limits of the current equal treatment doctrine in addressing inequality, which is the impetus for her theorizing vulnerability, are compelling. However, she offers little specificity about what precisely institutions might do to better respond to vulnerability, and she does not consider the ways in which these same institutions create and perpetuate vulnerability.36 Moreover, as Alexandra Timmer surmises from an analysis of the European Court of Human Rights, a body already employing the category of vulnerability, the “vulnerable subject” has not displaced the liberal subject. She notes that the vulnerability construct may enable the court to be more context-sensitive, impact caseload management and help in elaborating positive obligations, but the evidence is modest.37

#### Calls for vulnerability lack political work necessary to engage the most vulnerable

**Cole 16** (Alyson Cole, Queens College and the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, “All of Us Are Vulnerable, But Some Are More Vulnerable than Others: The Political Ambiguity of Vulnerability Studies, an Ambivalent Critique”, A Journal of Philosophy and Social Theory, Volume 17, 2016 - Issue 2: The Politics of Vulnerability, 7/2/16, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14409917.2016.1153896>) // EL

Vulnerable politics

Butler envisages that the general condition of precariousness can serve as a “basis for community.” “Precarity” (in distinction to “precariousness”), she specifies, is a “politically induced condition.” She elaborates that vulnerability is inseparable from “that dimension of politics that addresses the organization and protection of bodily needs,” and, further, that “minimizing the condition of precariousness in egalitarian ways remains one task for politics.” True enough, but what are the politics of vulnerability? What sort of political claim does vulnerability enunciate? Can the language of vulnerability articulate what Jacques Rancière depicts as “the naming of the wrong?” This concern encompasses two sets of issues: first, the relationship between ontology, ethics and politics; second, the politicization of the most vulnerable. For some, the theoretical move to foreground ontological vulnerability signals the displacement of politics by ethics – what Bonnie Honig, in another context, labels an “anti-politics of grief,” which she contends is central to a new, and inherently post-political, “mortalist humanism.” Critics of the so-called “ethical turn,” such as Honig and Rancière, tend to reify the political. Nevertheless, concerns over how prioritizing the ethical typically dilutes fundamental dynamics of politics, to wit struggle and conflict (what Rancière identifies as “politics’ core – namely dissensus”), as well as the ways in which power delimits what ethics can be realized, or even perceived, require consideration. After all, ethics might help us to identify questions of justice, but determining the line between misfortune and injustice, or the suffering we ultimately must resign ourselves to, and that we can fight to change, is an inherently political question, as Judith Shklar powerfully argues. And, there will be fierce disagreement: “[P]olitical predicates are open predicates: they open up a dispute about what they exactly entail and whom they concern in which cases.” Rancière, in his critique of Emanuel Levinas's formulation, rejects the possibility that empathy with the vulnerable can ground politics. As he explains, attempts to assist the vulnerable-as-vulnerable perpetuate rather than destabilize asymmetrical relations. Collapsing the political with ethical community, moreover, leads to “radical ethical indistinction” and the fantasy of “consensual politics.” The wrong articulated in politics exceeds competing interests, and therefore cannot be resolved through negotiation. It is, rather, a challenge to the very order of society, a demand for a fundamental restructuring. With Rancière, I tend to think that vulnerability presents a problematic entry into politics; it must be from a position of equality that we align ourselves politically in solidarity with the most vulnerable. In order for the most vulnerable to engage in politics and thus constitute a political subject, it is precisely that inequality, that asymmetry of power, which serves as the starting point. Grief and lamentation are not necessarily political, but complaint is. As a malleable and ambiguous condition (to follow the recent redefinition of the concept), vulnerability requires translation for politics, in order to “name the wrong.” To claim a wrong is to enact an ethics, but in a political form and language. Vulnerability has to be reframed as a claim about injustice. Because of its determinedly prospective temporality, vulnerability lacks urgency and makes no immediate demand. It thus cannot easily yield the moment of (Rancierian) politics: “a determined kind of speech situation: in which one of the interlocutors at once understands and does not understand what the other is saying.” Victimization can more easily produce such moments. Consider the recent Black Lives Matter protests. These demonstrations most certainly entailed mourning, and were a powerful and poignant response to persistent “racial vulnerability.” However, the “mode of address” (to borrow a Butlerian phrase) was devoid of any ambiguity or ambivalence. Public expressions of grief were combined with righteous, outraged assertions of equality. “Black Lives Matter” semantically opposes not “racial vulnerability,” but death, and what Michael Eric Dyson has called “slow terror.” This is not simply an issue of rhetoric (the die-ins were silent, after all), but the terms of political engagement matter. Without rightly naming their condition, understanding – even for those who endure mistreatment – as well as the possibility for change are limited. Recall James Baldwin's searing indictment in The Fire Next Time: “For the horrors of the American Negro's life there has been almost no language. Some have taken umbrage with the specificity of the rallying cry, implying that the mantra should assert the value of all life instead. Such universal truisms evade the issue, “water[ing it] down with a generic feel-good catchphrase,” and thus evacuating it of its political force. Might a similar criticism be applied to the universal iteration of vulnerability? Black Lives Matter provides an illustration of addressing a universal condition through a specific case. Feminists have long been wary of the latent particularity of universalisms, at least since Simone de Beauvoir's observation that “man represents both the positive and the neutral.” Most have argued instead for “making a universally applicable change … through embracing, not through obscuring or denying or eliding particularity.” In contrast, the vulnerability literature focuses primarily on promoting an affective attunement to a condition of generality, presuming that recognizing our shared vulnerability will inevitably generate responsiveness to vulnerability in general. Vulnerability might be productively conceived as an affective posture and/or an epistemology, but the literature falls short by ending there. Scant attention is paid to explicating the content of, and what will promote, “political responsibility.” In this way, the thoughtful work on vulnerability risks becoming another manifestation of what Lauren Berlant characterized as “trauma's seduction of politics,” whereby the dynamics of dominance and inequality shift towards questions of feeling. Reflecting on the case of Black Lives Matter also suggests that the project of vulnerability studies constitutes an effort to address the epistemological ignorance of the privileged, theorizing vulnerability predominantly from their point of view. It remains unclear what benefit the acceptance of constitutive vulnerability offers the disadvantaged. Similarly, Rancière's account of the political reminds us of the importance of positionality and helps to distinguish between competing vantage points – between those who, prompted by their exclusion (“the part of those who have no-part”), make the political claim, and others. In sum, scholars rightly question the reductive association of vulnerability with weakness and helplessness, expose the dangers and futility of the quest for invulnerability (which might be the literature's most significant contribution) and productively amplify the enabling aspects of vulnerability. Nevertheless, the language of vulnerability may not be able to perform the political work the most vulnerable require and deserve. We will not know the full potential of vulnerability as a critical category until scholars directly engage the demands and dynamics of politics.

s to come.