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## Wartime’s “Undeniable Linkages”: Feminist Studies of Everyday Militarisms across Time and Space

## Review of Attachments to War: Biomedical Logics and Violence in Twenty-First-Century America by Jennifer Terry (Duke University Press, 2017); Aerial Aftermaths: Wartime from Above by Caren Kaplan (Duke University Press, 2018); and Reencounters: On the Korean War and Diasporic Memory by Crystal Mun-hye Baik (Temple University Press, 2020)

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### Abstract

Feminist scholars and social movements have long been important voices against war and empire. Yet the era of global “endless wars” stretches behind and before us, challenging both our longstanding intellectual theories of violence and our political strategies for combating entrenched imperialism. This essay reviews three monographs in the emergent field of “everyday militarisms,” a new direction forward for understanding and criticizing global war in the past, present, and future. Threading connections between feminist science studies, cultural studies, and women of color and transnational feminisms, these texts ask us to more closely consider how elements of war show up in ordinary formations. I highlight how these books and the field of everyday militarisms more broadly makes us question what is understood as feminist work in both theory and method, through their shared and novel feminist theories of temporality. Together they open new understandings of ongoing systemic and state violence in the world today and different political paths forward in the face of seemingly intractable conflict.

### Keywords

### everyday militarisms, feminist science studies, wartime, cultural studies

In late August 2021 mainstream and social media became inundated with pictures, videos, and stories of the Taliban’s retrenchment in Afghanistan and fall of the US–supported government as the US military prepared to withdraw all troops by August 31. The US invasion of Afghanistan after September 11, 2001, was synonymous with the start of the “Global War on Terror.” Twenty years later, the war was coming to an end not with democracy for the Afghan people—as multiple US presidential administrations had claimed was the purpose of the occupation—but instead with a negotiated withdrawal that allowed the Taliban back into power. Much of the news coverage focused specifically on the plight of women and children under the new Taliban rule, highlighting the need for women’s rights activists to be granted refuge in the US and EU, or showing pictures of female US GIs cradling Afghan babies as they waited for emergency airlifts. Speaking the day after the Taliban took Kabul, President Joseph Biden claimed the war was unwinnable, not because of US military ineptitude but because the Afghan military did not fight hard enough: “We gave them every tool they could need…We gave them every chance to determine their own future. What we could not provide them was the will to fight for that future” (Biden 2021). Present in President Biden’s remarks are the familiar gendered assumptions of US empire that runs on the drumbeats of endless wars (even when they “end”): that US occupation started and continued as a benevolent, peacekeeping mission; that effeminized, vulnerable subjects can only be saved by imperial rescue; and that sophisticated militarized technology can conquer recalcitrant populations and landscapes. In the US withdrawal from Afghanistan, past, present, and future spun around each other and blurred together—while mainstream media focused on analyzing whether the US military had done too much or not enough, Afghans fought for the acknowledgment that they had been living under neocolonialism for successive regimes, which would continue even after direct US occupation ended.

Critical antiwar and anticolonial scholarship and activism within feminist studies has long unpacked and questioned these assumptions. The end of the war in Afghanistan, the “beginning” of the War on Terror, highlights how the long shadow of the War on Terror has shaped important scholarly and political debates on the gendered dimensions and impacts of historic and contemporary imperialist violence. Three recent texts bring a particular resonance and insight to the present moment we find ourselves in, in which militarism blurs the lines between the domestic and foreign: Jennifer Terry’s *Attachments to War: Biomedical Logics and Violence in Twenty-First-Century America* (2017), Caren Kaplan’s *Aerial Aftermaths: Wartime from Above* (2018), and Crystal Mun-hye Baik’s *Reencounters: On the Korean War and Diasporic Memory Critique* (2020). These books encompass some of the most exciting themes to emerge in the still-forming field of everyday militarisms, a field that is indebted to, but also exceeds, feminist studies. These texts address numerous gaps in the studies of war and militarism. Their focus on the everyday and domestic dimensions of militarism offers a corrective to a masculinist centering of spectacular violence as the only way that empire asserts its power, still common in military history and military studies. The urgency of such work is brought to the fore from the “end” of the war in Afghanistan. These three books offer to scholars and activists alike thoughtful fodder on how militarism has persisted and grown, and the points of weakness upon which we may collectively push to challenge its hegemony and proliferation.

The intention of this essay is to both highlight the contributions of these three texts and the themes that weave through them, as well as to capture the current moment of field formation of the study of “everyday militarisms.” As it has been conceived of by its practitioners, one concern of the field of the study of everyday militarisms is that of practices and theories of the archive; this review essay, chronicling books by three renowned scholars who have helped build this field, serves as an archival analysis of the field’s present moment as much as it aims to explore what is in the texts themselves. How and why are feminist studies and feminist scholars particularly well suited to build this field of everyday militarisms? Feminist scholarship on war, colonialism, and empire from postcolonial and transnational perspectives have powerfully highlighted the lived experiences of colonized women’s experiences of war and imperial violence, troubling the modern assumption of the separation between the domestic and the foreign (e.g., Djebar 1993; McClintock 1995; Abu-Lughod 2013). So too has feminist science studies, particularly women of color and postcolonial feminist science studies, explored how empire’s vested interest has shaped technological innovation and, in fact, the concept of advancement through progress itself (Harding 2006; TallBear 2013; Subramaniam 2014). Finally, there is much work in feminist currents in the interdisciplinary field of critical military studies, which is situated in political science and international relations. Critical military studies has addressed similar themes to the study of everyday militarisms, such as how war’s technologies and practices complicate gender binaries and feminist ontologies of modern war (Clark 2018, 2019), and the co-production of scientific (especially medical) knowledge with practices and frameworks of warfare (Howell 2017). However, critical military studies and the study of everyday militarisms remain separate, as evidenced by a lack of cross-citation between the two fields.

These three books add to the ongoing conversations in the study of everyday militarisms and feminist studies writ large. They expand what is legible as feminist studies, by offering gendered readings of structures and discourses that are not always immediately apparent as such. Baik, Kaplan, and Terry have disciplinary backgrounds and trainings in gender, sexuality, and women’s studies, and have held tenured faculty positions in feminist, gender, and sexuality studies departments. All three authors claim the political and intellectual position of feminist inquiry, especially feminist methodologies, in their book’s introductions. Yet rarely do these books focus explicitly on women, femininity or masculinity, or queer people as identity categories. Whether it is Kaplan’s study of the eighteenth-century British military survey of Scotland, Terry’s look at anthrax and the threat of biological warfare, or Baik’s critique of a multimillion-dollar US naval base on Jeju Island in Korea, these books use a feminist method of connecting different domestics transnationally to re-evaluate objects, events, and tropes not normally understood as gendered to reveal new insights about the militarization of everyday life.

Jennifer Terry’s *Attachments to War* seeks to understand how empire manifests in discursive and material projects of “care and healing” in our present moment to naturalize and depoliticize violence and war (4). She focuses specifically on biomedical research from 2002 until 2014, during the period of the US wars in Afghanistan and Iraq bracketed by ostensibly official declarations by the government of the wars’ starting and ending of formal hostilities. For Terry, biomedicine, which encompasses the “multiplying branches of modern biological sciences in their convergence with medical research, treatment, and profiteering,” has a specific role in how it “serve[s] to make excuses for violence” (3) by portraying US techno-imperialism as beneficial for all of humanity. The relationship between war and medicine "perpetuates and elaborates processes of militarization through which war comes to be tacitly accepted as a necessary condition for human advancement” (6). This relationship, the “biomedicine-war nexus" (28), is a force that foments the affect of “attaching” to war, the salvatory promise of violence that, on one hand, acknowledges that war harms and maims, and yet still promises that the “future of humanity” will be improved through biomedical breakthroughs only possible because of war (14). The attachments to war experienced in everyday ways by ordinary people in the US do “not necessarily mean to be in support of war” (15) but emerge just as strongly from what is rejected as from what is yearned for. Who will benefit from science’s triumphs, and who will be sacrificed for its development? Terry traces the “unequal evaluations of life” (20) required for biomedicine’s “secular salvation” (18), the biopolitical discourses that justified wounding soldiers psychically and physically and killing and maiming innumerably more Iraqis and Afghans. The current calculus used to justify the cost of war (not just in money but in bodies and lives), she argues, has “submerged” the “overt racialization” of eugenics in favor of “a language of cost-effective investment about who will lead a productive life” (24) and is therefore worthy of being saved.

The book’s first chapter thoroughly maps Terry’s concept of “the biomedicine-war nexus,” showing how the “militarization of everyday life” has taken hold (28). Terry argues that the transformation of the US into a “total war society” (29) during and after World War II centered on the building up of the nation as always under threat, and yet able to capitalize from that insecurity. The United States’ “apocalyptic orientation toward the future coexisted with a promise of being saved” through the knowledge produced from a state of “insecurity” (32), a promise that hails ordinary people into a role of always monitoring for intrusion, infection, and degradation of the health of the state’s “body.” The occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq were thus conceptualized in gendered terms as benevolent, transmuting the violence of war into “healing interventions” that would heal “the disease of insurgency” (37). Chapters 2 through 4 chronicle specific biomedical projects that emerge from and foment attachments to war. Chapter 2, “Promises of Polytrauma,” details the “cruel optimism” (per Lauren Berlant) of regenerative medicine, which promised that the massive injuries to soldiers’ limbs and organs would give rise to high-tech “miracles” (54), thus justifying their sacrifice and federal spending on biomedical research. Terry contrasts the “dispassionate quality” of medical diagnostic terminology to describe the common injuries suffered by Afghanistan and Iraq War veterans to the “heart-rending portrayals” (62) in mainstream media television programs of patients undergoing regenerative treatments and therapy.

In the third chapter, “We Can Enhance You,” Terry shows how bionic prosthetic researchers took the Afghanistan and Iraq Wars as “an opportunity to accelerate” their research and offer to the US public a promise that “all bodies would someday have the potential to be superhuman” (90). Yet embodied in that promise is a moralizing framework that sorts out the worthy disabled individual who seeks individual self-improvement “by making use of scientific knowledge and technology” (95) from those who are “deemed not worthy of care either because they are blamed for their disabilities or, it is assumed, they have nothing to lose” (96). Finally, Chapter 4, “Pathogenic Threats,” turns from the feeling of hope and care explored in chapters 2 and 3 to instead the power of the “negative emotion of insecurity” as fostered and “exploited” by biotech and pharmaceutical companies who profited off research into biowarfare and bioweaponry (142). US epidemiology and state efforts to combat disease have always been shaped by racialized and gendered notions of subaltern populations and bodies as vectors for disease. Terry argues that the twenty-first-century War on Bioterror, as inaugurated by the US response to the anthrax letters at the end of 2001, shifted from a framework of war as an “allegory” of medical intervention to distinctly “define” war as itself a compendium of medical technologies, processes, and interventions (147).

Like *Attachments to* War, *Aerial Aftermaths* looks unflinchingly at the technophilia of modern warfare and seeks to complicate the narrative of progressive development upon which imperialism justifies generations of violence against marginalized populations. Caren Kaplan pushes back against the predominant “unified technodeterminism of aerial perception” (11) as typically told in histories of the science of aerial views and flight. Instead, she traces through history “the violence always already inherent” in both the colonial desire to see all and the “romanticized” resistance to being seen (3). The book is laid out mostly chronologically, analyzing practices and products of aerial views of predominantly European creation, from eighteenth-century surveying and balloon flights to twentieth- and twenty-first-century aerial photography and much in between. Kaplan asserts that “warfare did indeed link all these practices,” yet does not aim to “create a linear timeline” marching “from watchtower to space platform” (30). Instead, she uses “unusual juxtapositions” to show “the points of continuity and discontinuity between declared and undeclared wars that take place on the same point on a map or dispersed in time and space” (30). In doing so, Kaplan asserts that rather than a unilateral march of development that culminates in an ultimate ability to perceive perfectly, “the history of aerial imagery itself reveals the emergence of ‘ways of seeing’ that underscore the uneven and varied nature of embodied observation in modernity, as well as the instability of vision’s primacy in Western culture” (4).

Guiding Kaplan’s work is the concept of “spectacular aftermaths,” defined as “a hegemonic discourse that deploys imagery to reinforce the division between war and peace, suggesting that state violence is rational, predictable, and confined to a proscribed space and duration” (7). Visuality is crucial here, in that visual perception and representation “display ‘what has been lost’ over and over in a melancholic campaign to remember” in a way that fits well with states’ desires to “regenerate certainty and belief in a progression toward a discernible future” (21). Kaplan joins postcolonial and women of color feminist historians who read colonial archives against themselves (Hartman 2008; Stoler 2009; Pursley 2019), showing how the imperial technologies and their cultural products can nonetheless generate “ways of knowing and being that do not always square…with the Cartesian, bounded subject and may not always operate congruently with the aims of empire and its military and security infrastructures” (22).

The first chapter, “Surveying Wartime Aftermaths,” focuses on the First Military Survey of Scotland conducted by the British Board of Ordnance between 1747 and 1755. Conducted after the suppression of the Jacobite uprising, the surveyors “traversed a physical environment replete with a recent overlay of death and destruction” (38) from the freshly completed war on a project of “unification through military occupation” (39). Kaplan reads the final survey, however, for its signs of wartime aftermaths, for what can and cannot be sensed in its layers of “paint and ink on paper” (58). In chapter 2, “Balloon Geography,” Kaplan examines “balloonomania” and the observations recorded on early manned balloon flights in France and England in the late eighteenth century. She troubles the “absolute binary” between views during flight as only a “joyful” and “aesthetic” experience and the hailing of aerial views as useful for military applications (69).

Chapter 3, “*La Nature à Coup d’Oeil,”* analyzes the proliferation, construction, and content of panoramic paintings in late eighteenth century England and how viewing in the round helped to create a new form of public consumption of “modern spectacle” (105). As in chapter 1, Kaplan shows how even the panoramic scenes of triumphant British imperial military battles did not simply create a “singular worldview” of nationalism, but also contained “palpable traces of other worlds and times” as well as “absence[s] whose enormity supersedes sensibility” (106). The emergence and entrenchment of aerial surveys and photography during World War I and in the interwar period come under scrutiny in chapter 4, “Mapping Mesopotamia.” In chronicling how aerial surveying emerged as a scientific rather than aesthetic practice, Kaplan complicates the “dominant narrative [which] emphasized the capacity” of aerial photography “to ‘see all’’; the fact that such photographs required layers of interpretation shows that this goal “remains elusive, partially achieved” (147). Kaplan moves British aerial surveys of Iraq to the center rather than periphery of the history of World War I and military science, showing how the specific ways that aerial views had the “desert represented as blank space” (143) built upon earlier Orientalist ideologies and interpolated the Middle East as a “coherent map and thus imaginable as a region to be controlled” (158) in the modern era.

The final chapter, “The Politics of the Sensible,” turns to contemporary aerial photography-as-art, analyzing three series of works that “trouble the boundaries that separate objective science, documentary realism, and auratic art” (182) to show how such boundaries have never been natural but are always policed. In the afterword, Kaplan reflects on the contemporary context of the War on Terror and the rise of drone warfare that brought her to this project, arguing that the current digitization and “annihilation of distance inherent to air war” in our present moment is “not so much an eruption of something new as an intensification of elements already dominant in US modernity” (208).

Crystal Mun-Hye Baik shares both Terry’s and Kaplan’s concerns with unpacking how militarism has become hidden in plain sight in quotidian materials and cultures in the modern era. This concern has become a major guiding theme of the emergent field of everyday militarisms (Kaplan, Kirk, and Lea 2020), to which this special section in this issue of *Catalyst* also contributes. Baik’s *Reencounters* aims to “move…away from spectacular forms of militarized violence” and instead examine the Korean War as a “suspended seventy-year conflict” (5) that continues despite the cessation of armed clashes in 1953. Baik builds what she terms an “archive of diasporic memory works” (6) related to the as-yet-fully-ended Korean War, a compendium of oral history projects, performance and video art pieces, documentary and art films, and reflections on conversations she had with various artists, activists, and community members in person and virtually over the course of several years. Her feminist methodology offers a linked ontological and epistemological way of challenging “Cold War dominant history” (9), a narrative of the Korean War that “naturalizes an incremental timeline in which American occupation is recoded as a transitive move necessary for the maturation of ‘developing’ nations” (11). Baik terms this diasporic memory archive as a collection of “aesthetic mediations” (8) that together function as and foster “reencounters,” the central theme of the book that gestures towards the cyclical nature of diasporic time and space. “Reencounters do not merely destabilize the everyday” but also allow for the fruiting of “*alternative* iterations of historical time and political possibility” (10).

The book’s use of “diasporic as a feminist mode of analysis” (24) allows Baik to sit with products and texts that go beyond the “canonization of literary texts as the dominant site of cultural analysis among Asian/Americanists” (23)—readers from diverse methodological trainings can thus find inspiration in varied parts of the book, whether one is looking for performance studies approaches, oral history methods, or critical film and visual cultural analysis. This method also allows Baik to argue that the concept of postmemory, well entrenched in memory and trauma studies, “produces discursive gaps” when applied to the Korean War; she argues instead that “the Korean War is *not* a hidden afterlife” and actually “remains a tinderbox” (16). Exceeding concepts of inherited trauma, *Reencounters* sets to show that “the *longue durée* of the Korean War embeds itself within the ‘non-militarized systems’” (17) that Koreans on the peninsula, Korean/Americans, and other diasporic subjects continue to reencounter in everyday life. In doing so, Baik centers “diasporic excesses, or non-normative subjectivities and spaces” (8) produced by US empire and shows how diasporic thinking exposes “confused gaps” (13) in global empire that can be broken open, rethought, and remade in the service of justice.

Each chapter deals with a different “non-militarized system” as viewed through a diasporic memory analytic (e.g., documentary film, oral history, performance art, combinations of these, and more). Chapter 1, “Militarized Migrations,” asks how and why US immigration policy and journalistic coverage transformed “Korean migrants displaced by armed conflict” into “naturalized American immigrants” (37) and obscured the violent events of US occupation that fomented Korean migration—in favor of a story that portrays the US as a benevolent home welcoming immigrants in search of a better life. In chapter 2, “Aurality,” Baik analyzes both the method and content of the Intergenerational Korean American Oral History Project, showing how oral history can be used to build political and community power. In doing so, the Intergenerational Project challenges hegemonic practices of oral history that assume a linear transfer of knowledge from the interviewee to the interviewer (77) and encourages oral history participants (rather than passive listeners) to understand how a story that one might “initially hear as a narrative devoid of ‘war content’ registers the naturalized sedimentation of militarized violence in the realm of contemporary life” (87).

Chapter 3, “Returns,” examines art produced by two transnational Korean adoptees to explore the larger phenomenon of the South Korean state encouraging Korean adoptees to return to South Korea starting in the 1990s. Baik shows how these aesthetic performances complicate “South Korea’s attempt to smoothly rehabilitate the transnational adoptee from a surplus figure rendered expendable into a vital contributor to the global and national economy,” arguing that the “symbolic and material value attributed to [adoptees]…is inseparable from the destructive dividends of war” (102). Chapter 4, “Durational Memory,” focuses on Jeju Island, off the southwestern South Korean coast, which is presented by South Korean as both a beautiful natural site for tourism and is home to a new multimillion-dollar naval base built under US-South Korean military cooperation (130). Baik discusses multiple cinematic and multimedia cultural products that connect contemporary military presence on the island to ongoing histories of violence, particularly the 4.3 Massacre, an anti-Communist military campaign that killed up to one-third of the island’s population from 1948 to 1955 (129–30). The continued militarized presence on Jeju Island shows how war is a “durational present” not a “historical past” for the island’s humans and nonhuman inhabitants (131). Baik closes the book not with a traditional conclusion but instead with “An Opening,” a mix of a closing reflective essay, photo essay, and varied form poems by Cristiana Kyung-hye Baik. In ending on an opening and a series of questions, rather than answers, Crystal Baik pushes back against the United States’ “incessant desire to definitively know, see, and touch” North Korea (183), a colonial drive towards definitive knowledge that shapes and is shaped by the unfinished Korean War. Baik ends on a “mode of refusal” and encourages readers to “consider…how the desire to make transparent and categorize is too often sutured to projects of knowledge that justify conquest, enclosure, and occupation” (185).

Shared amongst these three books are common themes of the militarization of everyday life, particularly around technology; the diversity of feminist scholarship that includes yet exceed issues of gender; and challenges to normative notions of time and temporality. These books do not simply chronicle how ordinary objects or events have become imbued with military meanings and valences. In fact, many of the objects under analysis are likely strange and unfamiliar to many readers’ actual lives: prosthetic limbs and stem cell therapy (Terry 2017), or military manuals for drawing and interpreting maps when flying in a plane (Kaplan 2018, 160–71). At times, the focus on technology that is definitively *not* part of normal life for many people around the world may belie the “everyday” dimension of warfare these texts seek to uncover. However, these books do analyze domestic warfare through its association with household or common objects (or objects that have been made common). Baik opens the book with an art exhibit on *budae jjigae,* or “army base stew,” a Korean comfort food that was originally made with surplus US army rations. Kaplan points out how ubiquitous the surveillance technology that allows us to see from above has become in narrative culture and journalistic endeavors. More importantly, however, the authors seek to provincialize and de-exceptionalize the often arcane and coded technologies of wartime, a deeply feminist science project.

In doing so, as Baik explains, these texts demonstrate how imperial war has always “register[ed] the undeniable linkages between the transnational and domestic” (2020, 39). The three authors all complicate a neat divide between war occurring “over there” and the home front as separate from but still invested in war, particularly through analyses of specific subject identities. We see this in Terry’s wounded veteran paraded for the domestic public as a beneficiary of and sacrifice for superior technology with universal benefits (chapter 2), and in Baik’s transnational adoptee who refuses neat designations of “native” or “foreign” identities and thus valuations from both the US and South Korean states (chapter 3). Contemporary readers who consumed the imagery of crowded airports filled with Afghans attempting to flee Kabul may feel an uncomfortable kinship with Kaplan’s new imperial citizen of late eighteenth-century London who became “uncomfortable close to sensing the wars” portrayed as occurring only in distant lands and yet intimately viewed in a panoramic painting (2018, 106).

However, Terry’s and Kaplan’s choices to focus mainly on US and British imperialisms respectively runs the risk of reinforcing an already strong frame of the emergent field of feminist everyday militarisms as Anglocentric. Both authors acknowledge this in their text, and there is a great humility and empathy in the way both Terry and Kaplan approach their own entanglements to wars past and present without excusing or downplaying them. Terry’s story ends up particularly powerful, as she opens and closes her book with a personal story of familial pain as caused by war to show how all of us can imagine otherwise, outlining in the epilogue the possibilities and limitations of US-based movements for peace. Resonances exist between how war has irretrievably changed the path of hers and Baik’s families both—the texts’ feminist analytics help the reader to understand their stories together without flattening them into parallel or equal experiences of violence.

Students and scholars of feminist cultural studies, cultural geography, and science and technology studies will find much to glean from all three texts. Together, they serve as a jumping off point to examine contemporary militarized interventions into individual and collective well-being. Terry’s final chapter on “pathogenic threats” and bioterrorism feels particularly prescient as the COVID-19 pandemic marches on and mainstream media and politicians discuss combatting new pathogens like monkeypox in the language of biosecurity, surveillance, and policing. She warns that the state invests in the narrative that “all bodies are conceived as potentially threatened or threatening, and some more threatening than others” (26)—a warning that accurately describes current escalating attacks on the bodily autonomy of queer and trans people and women. Furthermore, all three books share methods and sources that will be familiar and immediately accessible to cultural and performance studies scholars, particularly their close readings of visual materials.

Yet social scientists, especially those concerned with ethnography and feminist theories of the archive, would benefit from sitting deeply with these texts. Geographers, who sometimes prioritize the analysis of cartographic materials to the exclusion of other visual and cultural objects, could find inspiration in strong place-based analysis of other materials, especially Kaplan’s and Baik’s embedded in place choices of objects, people, practices, and stories. Those interested in community-based history in sociology, anthropology, linguistics, and other humanistic social sciences would benefit from Baik’s feminist methods of oral history that challenge bright lines between political and intellectual work development. Baik’s chapter 2, “Aurality,” gives a powerful corrective to oral history frameworks that assume a linear transmission of information from interviewee to interviewer. Instead, she demonstrates how “aural history as a critical participatory process” (74) can complicate hard boundaries between political and intellectual work, thus “potentiat[ing] solidarities *through* and *in tension with* difference” (72). Scholars interested in analyses of everyday militarisms and the domesticity of warfare should similarly encourage themselves to think how the theories and methods used in these texts can be brought in new directions. New work using these books could analyze less-studied imperial formations aside from US and European (particularly British) examples, and build on the strength of Baik’s work to ask how research in the field can directly contribute to antiwar struggles transnationally. Additionally, scholars already concerned with feminist critical military studies who, due to their disciplinary histories and silos, are currently separate from the texts discussed here will find cross-pollination on some of the topics suggested in this essay. For instance, work on the embodied experience of drone warfare conceived of as “remote” (Clark 2022) could find much in Kaplan’s and Terry’s discussions of the long history of how bodies have been separated out from the technological development of killing technologies, even as bodies are still the target for death and destruction.

It is important to highlight the feminist foundation of these three books because in many if not most of their examples, the authors eschew a direct look at formations of gender identity, let alone womanhood. While few would claim that feminist scholarship need be reduced crudely to such binaristic ideas, it must be acknowledged that pressure is often put particularly on junior scholars of color to show their work is “sufficiently feminist” by dealing directly with gender and/or sexuality. Terry and Kaplan, as prominent scholars in their own rights, offer to an emerging generation the confidence and legitimacy to deal broadly with analyzing materials that may not on their face appear to be within the bounds of gender studies, expanding the disciplinary bounds of what can be considered feminist science studies. *Reencounters* is Baik’s first monograph, and in it the reader finds a thoughtful challenge to taken-for-granted assumptions in feminist theory and a refusal to reify or re-naturalize identity formations and hierarchies that do not serve to build towards justice and decolonization. Baik generously offers feminist “moments of connectivity through relational difference” (185), both when discussing issues of gender and sexuality and beyond them.

Finally, it is in these texts’ approaches to temporality that their most unique offerings can be found. All three books deal with war’s past, presents, and futures, and although their empirical analyses give different weights to each, the authors show how living through violence belies and disrupts neat delineations of linear time. Kaplan’s afterword names the muddied temporal context in which she wrote her manuscript, “a period of persistent yet undeclared war, a war that can be figured in some ways as only as old as my daughter and in other ways reaching back to my grandmother’s youth or perhaps even further into the past” (207). The ending of the war in Afghanistan, which opened this essay, is one marker among many of a still endless “undeclared wartime” in which official declarations of war’s starts and ends blur into the continued militarized violence impacting our everyday lives.

The ambiguous temporality of imperial wartime—and of those who survive in its shadow and aftermaths—permeates all three books. For Baik, this is best articulated through the concept of “chrononormativity,” which she defines as “the naturalized plotting” of individual, familial, and even national development “along a linear trajectory defined by heteronormative expectations” (2020, 38). Baik’s chrononormativity of the Cold War specifically must be named for Korean diasporic ways of being otherwise to be recognized as such. This concept of chrononormativity connects well with Kaplan’s description of how aftermaths do not actually always occur as “after” the event: “for some, the past refuses to remain neatly contained and may roam around in the present or hail the future, folding different times and spaces into an unruly or repetitious mode of emotional life” (2018, 18). Palpable in both Baik’s and Kaplan’s knitting together of past and present is how imperial violence relies on and reinforces the idea that the past must remain just that—allowing the past to move around in “unruly” ways threatens to bring down the entire colonial house. Baik reminds readers that if we “insist…on the animated relationality of past(s), present(s) and future(s),” we can lay bare “how the politicized terrain of remembering underscores a future (or futures) that is not yet determined” (2020, 158). We have the power to collectively determine that future as one that is more just than the present. It also behooves antiwar scholars and activists to heed Terry’s tales of how militarized technosalvation also promises a better future through “anticipatory” logics, ones which “enlist…the future as a salve for the suffering of the present” (2017, 54). It is not enough to say that militarized futures should be combated because they continue, instead of dismantling, the current inequalities of the present. We must also remain attentive to how capitalism and warfare work together to make the “future invade the present not only in terms of anticipating risks and dangers but also in terms of hoping for better days ahead” (95).

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