

BOOK REVIEWS

WHY IS THE MEDIA NOT REPORTING ON RAPE OF MEN AND BOYS IN WARZONES?

Berit von der Lippe and Rune Ottosen (eds.): Gendering War and Peace Reporting. Some Insights – Some Missing Links. Nordicom, Gothenburg, 2016, 278 pages. Price: 280 DKK.

The answer to the headline question will not be answered in this review. I know, you already hate this reviewer. And you will not find the answer in the anthology either. What you will find in the anthology is a mind wrecking discussion about why that kind of story doesn't make the news and how it seems almost impossible for it to change unless we begin to speak about what constitutes war across cultures, nation-states and continents. And to speak about the reporting of war. What principles and interests keep media, military and politicians throughout the world busy producing and reproducing certain images of what war is, who gets to talk about it, and what gets to be talked about. Initiating that conversation is the aim of the essays in this anthology. Not to give you answers per se, but to put forward knowledge about how news about war becomes news as you know it, and why looking at it through the perspective of gender makes it possible to begin a conversation about what is really going on in the production of news about war and peace.

THE ROLE OF GENDER IN JOURNALISM AND JOURNALISM RESEARCH

It is difficult not to be a tiny bit ecstatic about the anthology when you are doing research in the field of journalism and gender, which is the overall subject of the book. The ecstatic feeling has to do with overall joy because of the actual production of knowledge about a subject which both scholars, international organizations, politicians and students seem to agree is important. But the small amount of research done in this field makes you wonder what that gap is about. That

thought was exactly what turned the conference *Gender, War and Conflict Reporting* held by Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Science in 2015 into this anthology. As the editors describe it in the preface to the book: “At that conference we became aware that more often than not these gendering perspectives are silenced or marginalised in journalism, as well as in academic literature” (7). Let’s just stay with that quote and take a detour to Denmark. As a former journalist in Denmark, the lack of research about gender and journalism was what led me in precisely that direction. Of all the Scandinavian countries – which we consider rather similar regarding views on gender and equality, not least regarding research on gender – Denmark is the only one with no consistent research on journalism and gender, whereas you find research collectives in Norway, Sweden and Finland. The first research on journalism and gender was done in 1982 by Else Jensen from University of Copenhagen. Since then, most research has been on *representations* of gender in the media (see e.g. Rikke Andreassen (2005; 2015); Hanne Jørndrup and Martine Bentsen (2016)) and the focus has been less on the role of gender in the *production* of news in Denmark.

MULTIPLE APPROACHES

Many of the contributors in the anthology are extremely skilled within the research field of gender and journalism. Linda Steiner writes about the history of the female war reporter, and Elisabeth Eide explores how the largest Afghan news agency represents women in their reporting. Kristin Skare Orgeret examines how femininities and masculinities are attributed to men and women. There is also room for contributors who are not academic researchers, for example Sarah Macharia, who draws on her knowledge about gendered narratives as leader of the international survey *Who Makes the News*. All chapters except the introduction are essays and therefore more loose in their form than articles in academic

journals in general. It is quite a relief, if you ask me. The language flows much more intuitively, and the essays are not merely constructed around literature review, methodology and empirical data. And the variety of subjects within the overall frame makes some of the chapters quite the page-turners! Take for example ‘Being a female journalist at the frontline’ which is an autoethnographic account from a former correspondent, now PhD-student, or ‘Why War – Still?’ which draws on the talk between Albert Einstein and Sigmund Freud and brings in perspectives of masculinity. Not to mention ‘Subversive Victims?’ which asks the question that forms the headline of this review.

The multiple approaches make it easier for a new (and old) reader to the field to think *with* the texts. Some academic texts become so keen on arguing the importance of themselves that it seems as if the text is trying to convince me about its results instead of just quietly describing the issues in focus. And then the text has lost me as a reader. It is also in regard to that I will recommend you to skip the intro. Even though it may seem radical. Read it later. Indulge in the actual essays. They will spark your interest and your thinking about how to understand peace and war reporting.

What the anthology, published in 2016 – before #metoo sparked a renewed interest in sexism at workplaces – can teach us as researchers, workers and citizens is to speak up about what we experience, in order to end the silent era and begin a new one where we talk about our experiences – both men and women.

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PERFORMATIVE & EXPERIMENTAL (CRITICAL) METHODOLOGICAL ASSEMBLAGES

Claudia Aradau, Jef Huysmans, Andrew Neal and Nadine Voelkner (eds.): Critical Security Methods: New Frameworks for Analysis. Routledge, 2015, 214 pages. Price: £31.49.

PERFORMATIVE & EXPERIMENTAL APPROACHES TO METHODS

Over the last two decades, Critical Security Studies (CSS) has become an established field within Security Studies and International Relations. However, many new CSS scholars are uncertain how to proceed methodologically because established CSS scholars critically approach different issues from different perspectives and through different methodologies. This book is part of a recent turn to address this gap. Aradau et al. convincingly and helpfully suggest a re-conceptualisation of methods and analytical frameworks in CSS as performative and experimental. This book captures the interests of a wide readership as it is imbued with anthropological, feminist, new materialist, posthuman, and sociological thoughts and scholars. While the books' *theoretical* underpinnings will not be novel to many feminist scholars – especially those interested in Science and Technology Studies

(STS) – they are in the process of making a breakthrough in CSS and Security Studies at large. Nevertheless, the *methodological* suggestions are not only relevant to CSS scholars but also feminist STS scholars.

Critical Security Methods sets out to argue that methods should not be thought of as mere bridges between theory and methodology or theory and practice. Instead, Aradau et al. argue that a critical practicing of methods is based on three premises. Firstly, they see *methods as practice* and reject the rationalist understanding that theories, methodologies, and methods are selected in a separate chronological order and prior to research. They argue that methods are not tools separate to the empirical world but rather developed and deployed as part of security practices and studies (5). Secondly, they draw heavily on STS thinkers to argue for *methods as an experimentation* where researchers experiment with combining theories, concepts, methods, and data in novel ways to unveil that which usually remains hidden or kept apart (8). Thirdly, they argue that researchers have a moral, ethical, and political responsibility to critically reflect on and problematise the ways in which *methods as practices have effects* on politics, society, security practices, and the field of Security Studies (14). The question of how to “apply” methods should, thus, not be solved but rather problematised to ensure that we do not fail to see and question methods as part of the empirical world (6).

METHODOLOGICAL ASSEMBLAGES

Drawing on Bourdieu's field theory and Latour's actor-network theory, Chapter 2 discusses *mapping* as a way to study the spatiality of politics and security practices (23). The authors argue that we must ask: How are maps produced, assembled, constructed, inscribed, and shaped by humans and tools? How are maps used and how do they take on their own social and political life?

Chapter 3 suggests relationality as a methodological principle to understand the con-

tinuously changing interplay of *discourse/materiality* (63). Operationalising relationality through Foucault's dispositif, Butler's performativity and Barad's and Bennett's STS understanding of agency allows the researcher to ask how discourses/elements become entangled and fixed, and how the agency of things is mobilised for security purposes.

Growing out of semiotic and affect theories, Chapter 4 poses that *visuality* is never separate from security practices as visuals can transform and disrupt established security practices and meanings (112). The authors call on security scholars to ask: How do visuals constitute "truths"? What are the emotive powers of visuals? And how do viewers actively interpret visuals?

Chapter 5 encourages scholars to utilise participant observation as a device to negotiate the *proximity* between research and practice. Chapter 6 argues that Foucault's and Bourdieu's concepts are too often liberally inserted into security studies to reinforce "security's hold on and over the problematisation of politics" (142). The authors see fieldwork as a way for the researcher to problematise such used categories, concepts, frameworks, and findings and achieve a certain *distance*. Thus, both chapters call for the researcher's reflexivity to consider their own placement in the field of social – and I would add material-discursive – forces that influence their thinking.

Drawing on Nietzsche and Foucault, Chapter 7 sees *genealogy* as critical method to conceptualise and problematise historical knowledge and practices. Historical archives are no longer seen as raw data but as assemblages of power/knowledge relations (183). Finally, *collaboration* is argued for as a means to challenge the limits of one's own knowledge production and include other dimensions (Chapter 8).

Throughout, this book lives up to its own premises and breathes method as practice and experimentation with a continuous consciousness of the effects of such practices. In a way that is reminiscent of Karen Barad's agential realism undoing seemingly clear-cut

boundaries (see Barad 2007), this book is both beautifully written into and undoing the "boundaries" of disciplines, philosophical backgrounds, and genealogies. Similarly, the book is a historical assemblage that emerges through the entanglements of the current materialist turn in the social sciences.

CRITICAL SECURITY METHODS FOR SECURITY AND FEMINIST STS SCHOLARS

This book is an essential contribution valuable beyond the realm of CSS. It is not only valuable to CSS' students, newcomers, scholars, and practitioners, but might even provide enriching and thought-provoking insights for those security scholars who continue to resist the pull of the critical, posthuman, and new materialist turn that has taken hold of Security Studies in recent years.

Similarly, this book provides constructive insights and inspirations for feminist STS scholars who continue to struggle to find their methodological footing. For feminist scholars unfamiliar with Security Studies, this book will be a pleasure to read, as it illustrates that feminist STS can—and actually already has—entered Security Studies and International Relations through CSS' ardent interest and inclusion of feminist, STS, and posthuman principles and theories.

While critical considerations generally never leave one content or answer all questions, I believe that the solution is found in finding a sense of contentment in realising the vast new insights that come with accepting such critical (and feminist STS) thinking. Accordingly, this book leaves me thoroughly content.

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