

Book reviews

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renée c hoogland (Editor in chief), Nicole R Fleetwood and Iris van der Tuin (Associate editors), *Macmillan Interdisciplinary Handbooks Series on Gender Studies*, Macmillan Reference USA: Farrington Hills, NC, 2016–2018; 4000 pp.: 9780028663234 (ebook and hardback)

Titles in series:

Gender: Sources, Perspectives, and Methodologies, edited by renée c hoogland

Gender: Nature, edited by Iris van der Tuin

Gender: Animals, edited by Juno Salazar Parreñas

Gender: God, edited by Sian Hawthorne

Gender: Laughter, edited by Bettina Papenburg

Gender: Love, edited by Jennifer C Nash

Gender: Matter, edited by Stacy Alaimo

Gender: Space, edited by Aimee Meredith Cox

Gender: Time, edited by Karin Sellberg

Gender: War, edited by Andrea Pető

Reviewed by: Sarah Smith, *Central European University, Budapest, Hungary*

The Macmillan Interdisciplinary Handbooks on Gender Studies provides an impressive 10 titles, each of which is anchored around a central theme or concept, that demonstrate the contributions of feminist, queer and sexuality studies theorising. Each volume, titles listed above, provides a constellation of chapters that engage the central concept and bring intersectional feminist, queer and anti-racist theorising to the fore. The editors themselves write that ‘the series in no way seeks, or is able, to present a *comprehensive* account of gender studies’ (hoogland et al., 2016: xi), and is instead focused on the task of signalling the depth and breadth of feminist, anti-racist and queer theorising contributions to postmodern (broadly conceived) thinking. The Gender Studies series certainly achieves this aim as it presents a multidimensional and interdisciplinary account of what it means to take gender seriously as an analytic category and as fundamental organising logic in social and political life. Given the limitations of any brief review, but particularly one that engages a series of this size, this review provides what can only be a limited insight into each volume in the series. It focuses on the core contributions of each and the multiple ways that gender has been deployed as a critical analytic tool and mode of theorising – that is, gender as relational and embodied, as an institutional dynamic, and as a logic that underpins problematic binaries in contemporary strands of Enlightenment thinking. Gender, then, is understood dynamically and intersectionally, and each of the volumes within the series engages queer theory, sexuality studies and critical race

scholarship as essential dimensions of gender studies. It is not possible to do justice to the incredibly rich chapters within each volume, and scholars from a breadth of disciplines and research themes will find value in the series.

The first volume in the series, *Gender: Sources, Perspectives, and Methodologies*, perhaps takes on the most ambitious task of all the volumes, seeking as it does to serve as an introduction to the entire field known as Gender Studies. The boundaries of this area(s) of study are not easily drawn, not least because of extensive feminist debate on the desirability of confining oneself to something that could be labelled a discipline. For this reason, it is perhaps best to work from Nina Lykke's (2011) moniker for feminist/gender/sexuality studies as 'this discipline which is not one'. It is difficult to imagine a more useful text than *Sources, Perspectives, and Methodologies* for those teaching and learning in feminist/gender studies, as the 31 chapters in this primer volume cover 'the extensive terrain of interdisciplinary gender and sexuality studies while introducing relative novices in the field to the wide range of theoretical orientations and thematic emphases within it' (p. xiv). This volume, according to its editor renée c hoogland, does intend to serve in part as a manual for gender and sexuality studies and is thus necessarily comprehensive; it grounds the volumes that follow in the Gender:... series as interdisciplinary and intersectional, and will no doubt serve as an important historical marker for the continuing development of these fields.

Gender: Nature, the second volume in the series, demonstrates the fundamental rupture that feminist, anti-racist and queer theorising have presented to the binaries and assumptions that underpin Enlightenment epistemologies and knowledge production. Drawing on interdisciplinary (or postdisciplinary – see Lykke, 2011) methods and theories, feminist, queer and critical race scholars have critiqued and rejected biological determinism and the social relations that have flowed from it. The chapters in this volume present a narrative on the trajectory of feminist, queer and anti-racist challenges to deterministic thinking and their engagements with nature, biology and the nonhuman. The chapters are rooted in Donna Haraway's concept of 'naturecultures', which at once draws into focus the constructed binary between nature and culture, and challenges it as socially and politically produced and productive. From here the volume and chapters therein provide insight into the disciplines that have sprung from these critiques, such as Feminist Science Studies (FSS) or Feminist Science and Technology Studies (FST), which engage 'specifically the interactions of science and society' thus challenging the notion of their mutual exclusivity (p. 29). The volume demonstrates the breadth of such critical work, as the chapters move between and within wide ranging disciplines, fields and sites.

Gender: Animals explores feminist thinking beyond the human, taking 'a less anthropocentric view of gender' (p. xiii). For animals to be subjects of feminist study has not been to take gender to animals, but rather to demonstrate how animals have already been bound up in processes of gendering and, in turn then, become an important medium for evidencing that gender is socially produced, constructed and projected. The human–animal link is also used to explain and naturalise gender differences and hierarchies. Take, for instance, Francis Fukuyama's use of chimpanzees to explain men's aggressive behaviours in international politics, and thus in turn justify their continued dominance in this realm to act as 'protectors' (Tickner, 1999). Beyond examinations of gendering the

nonhuman, the chapters in this volume also engage questions of human–animal relations and how a varied interaction with and control of animals have constituted human self-identity. Chapters also engage questions of consumption and slaughter as there is a long and rich history of feminist theorising on the consumption of flesh and how the practice fits with a feminist politic. As others have pointed out too, conceptualising the human in a constellation of species, rather than separate and dominant, is not only to understand interspecies dependence and co-constitution, but is also a matter of survival, as the human cannot be divorced from, or survive atomised from, diverse multi-species worlds (Mitchell, 2014).

In *Gender: God*, editor Sian Hawthorne positions the volume within the conventional historical trajectory of religion (or its decline) in relation to the emergence and consolidation of modernity: ‘The alleged liberating impetus [associated with modernity] is considered to have transformed the ways in which gendered and sexual subjectivities are conceived, experienced, and expressed’ (p. xiii). The volume demonstrates the essential intersectionality in feminist and gender studies, as, historically, feminist theology has predominantly been conducted from white feminist frameworks. As post-colonial perspectives have emerged, they have demonstrated how religiosity, in particular that which reflected European Christian values of religious belief, structured the demarcation of civilised–uncivilised that justified colonial and imperial interventions. Feminist theology outside of the western mainstream has taken up the challenge of displacing the Eurocentrism embedded in taking ‘God’ as a central analytic category (p. xiv). The ‘loosening’ of God from belief and the understanding of God as a projection or ‘mirror’ of (male) subjectivity has opened space for critical feminist perspectives to theorise ‘God’ as ‘connected to how social structures and relationships can be conceived, how communities might express themselves in the world and create bonds and boundaries between themselves and others’ (p. xvi). Therefore, the volume aims to bring gender into conversations with the ‘nature and function of divinity’ (p. xvi) to demonstrate how the latter shapes the social world as well as both the ‘coercive and emancipatory’ conceptions of God (p. xvi).

In *Gender: Laughter*, laughter is conceptualised as an emancipatory act for subjugated, marked or othered bodies, ‘an effective force that reverberates in and between bodies [and] shatters social hierarchies’ (p. xiii). The focus on destabilisation and marginality is due to both this emancipatory potential, but also because othered and non-conforming bodies/ways of being are the subject of jokes and ridicule, and thus comedy can operate to reinforce these same social hierarchies (p. xiv). In the chapter ‘Forbidding Laughter’, for example, Dianna Niebylski examines how the pious, pure, virginal woman has been constructed in part through the denial of laughter to female-identified bodies. Similarly, other chapters in the volume speak to how some bodies/identities are able to claim comedy, humour and satire (or lack thereof) as a means of constituting stereotyping and othering, and which reinforces sexist, racist, homophobic and ageist relations of power (for example, chapters on ‘Humourless Lesbians’ and ‘Islamic Feminist Satire’). Chapters such as those on ‘Crip Humour’ and ‘Older Women, Humour, and Social Activism’ in turn demonstrate how the control of laughter through, and directed at, proper bodies and subjects means that claiming satire and comedy for and from ‘non-traditional’ subjects can provide a radical and emancipatory power.

Gender: Love presents feminist and queer theory challenges to both the location and constitution of love, historically monopolised by heterosexual sexual romance, and critical interrogation of love's meanings. More specifically, as editor Jennifer Nash describes, the volume 'disrupt[s] the prevailing notion that love is exclusively ... romantic [and] show[s] that love can take several forms in both private and political life' (p. xiii). The volume locates love in various sites (friendship, political revolution, desire, self-love) and engages love as both an emotion and as 'a doing', a practice, or 'even a political strategy that can underpin social justice movements' (p. xiii). For example, Sachelle Ford's chapter on 'Revolution' provides an excavation of love as underpinning the Black Power movement in 1960s USA, and how the revolution itself was viewed by activists as 'an act of love of the people' (p. 179). Feminist and queer scholars challenge love as utopia and are attentive to sexualised connotations of love, as it is 'steeped in the workings of patriarchy and heteronormativity' (p. xiv), reflected for instance in the institutions of marriage and nuclear family, and neoliberal consumer cultures. On this last point, Patricia Arend's chapter on 'Consumerism' considers the entanglement of consumer cultures with love, with consumption represented as a demonstration of love and as a confirmation of particular gendered and sexualised ideals – the white heterosexual women who purchases certain products as part of her care and reproductive labour, a demonstration of maternal love, can perhaps serve as an archetype here.

In the academy, the historical development of disciplines has placed matter in the natural sciences, seemingly then out of reach for social and cultural studies, such as the likes of gender studies. The western-centric dualism of nature/culture has long been a source of critique and debate in gender studies. The volume *Gender: Matter* takes up the physical world, materiality and spatiality and places them squarely in the realm of culture, sociality and politics. It challenges supposedly common-sense binary categorisations of modernity – such as nature, culture, bodies, emotions – showing these as constructed rather than simply objectively existing 'matters'. Thus, *Gender: Matter* – in a similar vein to the volumes on Animals, Nature and Space – locates gender as a fundamentally relational organising logic that has relevance beyond an embodied or performed phenomenon within the realm of the human and human interaction. It again demonstrates the strength of this series and gender studies broadly, as a philosophical mode that ruptures the roots of Enlightenment thinking on modernity, order, logic and 'common-sense'. The volume moves through embodiment, showing how feminist and queer theorising have often simply sought to demonstrate the material existence of the realities of which they speak, thus highlighting the power inherent in being able to claim space for something as matter/reality. From here the volume moves beyond the human, examining matter outside of the human realm, and then moving crucially to relations and interactions between these worlds.

Gender: Space engages and explores the co-production of and gendered bodies and space. Gender constitutes and is constituted by spaces such as those of nation, state, rural, urban, developed, developing, and is marked and ordered by space defining and bordering practices. Feminist geography has served an important development in this regard with its querying of productive practices in the co-constitution of bodies and space, and the subversive practices that can undermine such processes. One fundamental challenge to the logics of 'space' – that has thus defined 'place' – emanating from

feminist critique has been to the production and separation of public and private spheres, and the consequences of deconstructing this binary have reverberated throughout feminist thinking. The falsity of the public–private binary and the supposed state refusal to engage in that defined as private are exposed in chapters that examine the production of the family as a (raced and gendered) space via state policy and marriage law. The chapters in this volume demonstrate, explicitly and implicitly, how feminist and queer theorising, in their quest for social justice, have challenged processes of ordering in the physical world (the ordering of bodies in and through the ordering of space) by showing how this maps onto and inflects the ontological ordering necessary for the maintenance of intersectional hierarchies. What they demonstrate is that the labelling of space occurs within and reflects relations of power, rather than the invocation of an objective or neutral physicality.

Gender: Time focuses on how time is lived, valued, spent, regulated and marked by social identities such as gender, race, age, class and ethnicity. Feminist exposure of the difference (and differential power) between productive and reproductive labour serves as a good example here. Marilyn Waring (1989), for example, demonstrated that women undertook labour, and undertook more and more differentiated types of labour, simply by asking a wide range of women how they spent their time. Even feminist thought is conceptualised as a linear development that progresses over time through ‘waves’. Indeed, the chapter on ‘Generational Time’ demonstrates the importance of time to feminist thinking which has formed around the notion of ‘waves’ of thought, and examines how, at the turn of the millennium, pundit claims that ‘feminism was dead’ led to a greater focus on time by feminists concerned with feminism’s future. Wånggren’s chapter provides a closer examination of the centrality of time, in terms of conceptualisations of linear progression and change, to first-wave feminism specifically. Further to this, chapters on temporalities challenge linear notions of time and thus progression, seeking to create alternative articulations of the linking and relationship between past, present and future. Given the social justice concerns of feminist, queer and anti-racist theorising, the volume also necessarily engages questions of futurity and persistence, which are woven within and throughout the chapters.

Feminist, post-colonial and queer theory have made significant contributions in relation to thinking on war and violence. The violence of war is directed at raced, gendered and othered bodies, and fought in defence of nations, the imaginary of which relies on particular gendered and racial constructions. The militarism that underpins war-making and war-fighting has always relied on particular notions of masculinity and femininity, and constitutes each in the process as well. *Gender: War* provides insights into these contributions across the themes ‘Conflicts’, ‘Effects’ and ‘Memorialization’. In ‘Conflicts’, the chapters focus on the particularities of war, such as who fights and dies in war, the gendered violences of war with especial attention to sexualised violence, and genocidal violence. The last two chapters in this section pay more attention to pacifism and to resistance against war. The chapters in ‘Effects’ examine broader issues of insecurity that, while not traditionally considered under the umbrella ‘war’, have been demonstrated by feminist scholars as deeply intertwined with processes of militarism and violence, and as perpetuating insecurity. These include considerations of human trafficking and policing, but also consider the affective dimensions of war. This section is rounded out with an

explicit and direct examination of effects, with chapters on processes of reconciliation and post-conflict reconstruction and the centrality of a gender dimension to each. In 'Memorialization', the continuing (gendered) politicisation of war and war memory is examined. This includes in the immediate aftermath of conflict and as part of reconstruction efforts (such as in truth commissions and criminal tribunals), as well as the stories that are long told of war and the ways in which contemporary narratives on historical wars reproduce and rely on particular gendered and raced imaginaries.

Taking the volumes together, the series speaks to the richness of gender studies research and demonstrates the unboundedness of gender studies, an area of study that has challenged both disciplinary anchoring and restrictions alike. The volumes in the series demonstrate the rigour and contributions of feminist, queer, anti-racist and sexuality studies, among others, as well as the ways in which gender, sexuality, race, religion, ethnicity, dis/ability, age and class are fundamental organising principles in social and political life, which serve to constitute hierarchies and relations of power. Common themes arise across the volumes in the series, in particular the formidable challenge that gender studies has presented to the binary structures of Enlightenment thinking, and that the 'gender' in gender studies is always inherently co-constituted alongside race, religion, ethnicity, age, ability and sexuality. The series also decisively demonstrates the ways in which gender can be conceptualised beyond the body, or at least thinking of the body as also socially constructed rather than as materially, objective, bringing in issues such as the nonhuman realm, space, nature and matter. Given the breadth and accessibility of the chapters across the Gender Studies series, it will no doubt serve as an enduring resource for researchers and educators alike.

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Andrea Pető, *Elmondani az elmondhatatlant, A nemi erőszak Magyarországon a II. világháború alatt*, transl [Telling the Untellable, The History of Second World War Rape in Hungary], Jaffa Kiadó: Budapest, 2018; 278 pp.: 9789634750833, 6357 Ft.

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The idea of *telling the untellable* might seem to have a difficult unidirectional aim: for example, a rape victim's ability to talk about the experience of such an atrocity, as with Christine Blasey Ford standing up and testifying on the stage of a congressional hearing. But the difficulty of telling the untellable also lies on the other side, in the transmission

to those listening, those who contribute considerably to the characteristic of something being untellable, whether it is in a male-dominated court room, or in a country where the field of gender studies is under continuous attack. Therefore, it is a tremendous effort by historian and professor at Central European University Andrea Pető to publish a book voicing wartime rape with a feminist approach in a country where this same year the study licence of Gender Studies was revoked by the government without official consultation or involvement of any institution.

Moreover, *Telling the Untellable* has managed to address the problematic memory of politics in Hungary and initiate modification to the image of history the country has about itself. The current mainstream governmental stance of remembering the atrocities of the Second World War in Hungary centres around the long-standing and controversial House of Terror Museum, where several simplifications and falsifications are represented regarding the Nazi and Soviet presence in the country. One of the worst is the display of the Arrow Cross Party (far-right party led by Ferenc Szálasi in power from 15 October 1944 to 28 March 1945) as the only participant in the persecutions of Jews, whilst the massive deportations transpired from 15 May to 9 July 1944 with the organisation of Hungarian officials, months before the party took power. Similarly, the interpretation of the siege of Budapest in 1945 by the Soviet troops has varied according to ruling governments in Hungary and never really addressed the excruciating truth about the sufferings of the people, but rather claimed to create an identity of a liberated/victimised country. Therefore, today's historical understanding in the public sphere of Hungary is not only a confusing disorder of narrative shifts, but of a perpetrator conscious martyrdom, which leaves out the significance of carefully redirecting attention and talking about the victims.

Pető's work, underpinned by extensive research, was recently published in Hungarian. Non-Hungarian speakers might be disappointed in their inability to read and familiarise themselves with such an important part of the history of the Second World War in Europe. However, I have to admit with frank selfishness that this work had to be published in the Hungarian language. The main reason being that scrupulous attention to and awareness of women's history are increasingly important in today's Hungary. To that end, this book constitutes a significant breakthrough.

On a more international level, *Telling the Untellable* is a milestone in contemporary historiography, not only because it adopts interdisciplinary approaches to unfold the history of the silenced female victims of wartime rape, but also because it employs the complex structures of its own politics of memory up to the present. The untold story of the women raped by Soviet soldiers is introduced from the theoretical perspective of feminist analysis and by methods drawn from comparative history.

Besides presenting historiographical bravura, Pető achieves her goal in presenting a holistic history to an audience that extends beyond academics in the field. The book, after its debut at the 2018 Budapest Book Fair and a high-profile book launch event at the National Archives of Hungary, is being introduced to the general Hungarian public at literary festivals, on radio shows, in print and television interviews with the author. Through these events the book furthers its aims of addressing the memory of war rape by establishing itself as a piece of memory in the contemporary public sphere of Hungary.

As a result, Pető's work not only 'teaches' and 'preaches', but constitutes important action.

The book's success and the considerable attention it has gained among a wider audience results from the accessible language and clear structure. The introductory section first discusses the main methodological and theoretical framework by focusing on Sándor Sára's film – which fits with Pető's interest in Hungarian politics of memory, a focus that encourages readers to (re-)watch the film. The first main section of the book is structured around the historiographical issues that have become taboo in Hungarian history: the Soviet occupations of 1945, and 1956 in terms of freedom *and* freedom of speech. The question of whether the events of 1945 are to be considered liberation or occupation by the Soviets is closely connected to social issues of Nazi soldiers versus Soviet soldiers and the extent to which Soviet soldiers were more commonly viewed as *the other* (Asian barbaric and not, for example, white Aryans). The book rightly pinpoints the regime change in 1989 as the end of the taboo on wartime rape and thus the opening up of feminist interpretation. Placing feminist perspectives at the heart of historical enquiry shifts perceptions, most significantly by providing a base of normalcy (telling) to give voice (untellable) for the women who were silenced, whether it is in the form of an interview, piece of writing, artistic expression, academic discourse, etc.

Pető presents a wide range of convincing examples to illuminate the different viewpoints that show the shift of memory in social discourse, not only in genre (film, fiction, testimonies, etc.) but in relation to cultural comparisons. She then presents the theoretical background to the different types and manifestations of wartime rape with analyses of what they aim to do. Pető bases her argument on the question of power relations and persuasively brings together complex issues by warning the reader that highlighting Soviets alone is not sufficient since all soldiers in this period (even Hungarian soldiers) were part of that military culture. Moreover, the rapists should not be easily labelled as male perpetrators, not only because it simplifies the understanding of the complex power structures of any particular group or society, but because in many instances the victims were also men. Pető then questions the multiple quantitative findings and statistics of wartime rape by introducing the difficulties of defining rape, together with the conceptual problems of measurement.

Following the above discussion, the next section of the book constitutes a thorough analysis of memory, which – because it has scarcely been discussed by victims of wartime rape themselves – is foregrounded in the analyses. In order to do this, contemporary memories of wartime rape are examined through a presentation of various cultural products, including films, documentaries, photographs, or word of mouth in the new digitised era. The book engages the reader by considering the difficult issue of public discussion of certain acts and the attendant legal processes. One of the most intriguing examples of memorialisation presented is the statue created by Jerzy Bohdan Szumczyk called *Komm, Frau*, a publicly exhibited artistic manifestation, and reactions to it, which is a significant representation of the current state of acknowledgement and acceptance in society.

Finally, Pető turns the table and introduces the Russian side, calling it the missing piece of the puzzle. With the implementation of the current Russian memory of politics – silence –, Pető carefully inspects the sources of her research up until the point that a paradigm shift can be identified. This last section is rather like a detective story in which

the historian reveals the internet as the basic platform for investigation due to the lack of open access and authorisation to enter Russian archives. The wide spectrum of the research on several platforms vocalises the Russian-speaking victims, witnesses and perpetrators and opens the ground for further discussion. In keeping with the European scene of analysis, the Ukrainian and Russian contestation of memory politics is discussed in order to provide understanding of social impacts, whilst also to introduce the topic of female Soviet soldiers.

Overall, this historical contribution succeeds in presenting a complex part of history which is entwined within the complicated world of memory politics. Already in the first sentence, we anticipate the depth of the research that this history book contains: 'Since 1996 I have been working on the history of wartime rape committed by Soviet soldiers.' The historian's contribution from this overarching research is an interdisciplinary history that is more than just a methodological device because it inspires the reader to watch films, read articles, engage in artistic criticism, go online, and not just place the book back on the shelf. Most importantly, Andrea Pető's book provides the ground for the discussion of rape, shows the strength of those victims who had been silenced for so many years, and offers ways to confront our history in the hope of a better future.