

Holly Furneaux. *Military Men of Feeling: Emotion, Touch and Masculinity in the Crimean War*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016. ISBN 978-0-19-873783-4.

Military Men of Feeling, the book with which Holly Furneaux seeks to offer a fresh reading of Victorian masculinities through interpreting the popular figure of the ‘gentle soldier’ in Victorian Britain, simultaneously advances the history of 19th-century masculinities and signals the potential for historical approaches in Critical Military Studies to contextualise the relationship between militaries, war and society across time. Furneaux’s aim in this study of mid-Victorian militarism and emotion is to reconfigure perceptions of how Victorians imagined masculinity and the soldier, particularly around the time of the Crimean War – when the figure of the British soldier, she suggests, was far from the stereotype of the emotionally repressed and stiff-upper-lipped British Victorian man that viewers and readers of popular histories are still likely to encounter. The Crimean War owes its place in British popular memory primarily to two tropes, one on either side of the hegemonic gender binary of militarism: one is the masculine valour of the ‘Charge of the Light Brigade’, commemorated in poetry by Alfred Tennyson only six weeks later, and the other is the mythology of the female war nurse built around Florence Nightingale’s field hospital. The condensation of Crimean War nursing into the Nightingale myth has, Furneaux shows, elided a history of male care-giving in the continued supply of military male orderlies and the forming in 1855 of the army’s first medical corps. The image of the ‘stiff upper lip’ popularly associated with Victorian officers such as the men who must have ordered their cavalry to charge into the face of certain death at Balaclava, meanwhile, remains powerful as a class-marked and racialised form of national masculinity which continues to inform the belief in military culture that the suppression of emotions is essential for effective soldiering – to the psychological detriment of soldiers and their families (Gray 2015: 115).

The evidence Furneaux has collected from Victorian literature, painting, letters and the material objects soldiers in Crimea sent home instead suggests a much more complex gendering of war and masculinity, beyond the established tropes of masculine valour and masculinity detached from care. This source material comes from a different century than the cultural artefacts and material objects that Critical Military Studies scholars researching video games (Robinson 2015) or mass-market military memoirs (Woodward and Jenkins 2010; Dyvik 2016) and their covers (Woodward and Jenkins 2012a) have used to show how the processes that produce military masculinities extend past military institutions themselves and into popular culture. In historical terms the sources are nevertheless comparable, and sometimes offer striking parallels with Critical Military Studies research on the present (Furneaux's discussion of soldiers' textiles could very well be juxtaposed with Joanna Tidy's research on the military and knitting (Tidy 2017)). Furneaux uses them to show how much the 'stiff upper lip' myth has hidden about the very phase of British military history that it connotes. Many novels and works of art inspired by Crimea depicted soldiers and officers with remarkable capacities for tenderness, intimacy and care, and soldiers' own correspondence – plus how their families remembered those who had died – shows these emblematic men of the Victorian nation engaging in the kinds of activities and showing the kinds of emotions that stereotype would suggest were the preserve of the equally emblematic ladies with their lamps. The 'gentle soldier', as Furneaux terms this form of 19th-century military masculinity, was not however proof that Victorian Britain was 'less bellicose' than usually thought; rather, Furneaux argues in terms that could apply as much to the post-Cold-War period as the mid-Victorians, 'in overlooking the continuing significance of the military man of feeling [...] we have misunderstood the cultural tactics by which supposedly civilized nations become reconciled to their participation in war'.

For readers familiar with feminist studies of war and gender in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, Furneaux's approach to the mid-Victorian period will immediately recall that of Claire Duncanson's research on the partial transformation of hegemonic military masculinities in British (and other Western) armed forces at the end of the Cold War as militaries adapted to the growing number of humanitarian and peacebuilding operations that depended more on liaison with local populations than on combat, leading to the emergence of more sensitive and empathetic 'peacekeeper masculinities' alongside the traditional masculinities of warfighting (Duncanson 2009). Duncanson's 'peacekeeper masculinities' evolved through United Nations (UN) and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) peace support operations such as those in Bosnia-Herzegovina and, she argues, gained new life during coalition warfare in Iraq and Afghanistan for their value in counter-insurgency. The resonance between Furneaux and Duncanson is no accident, since such 'alternative' or 'marginal' military masculinities have – as this special issue shows – long been a part of even the most kinetic forms of war. Indeed, this resonance is what makes this work of Victorian studies as relevant to interdisciplinary researchers of present-day militarism as it will be to gender historians of Victorian Britain: *Military Men of Feeling* succeeds in drawing together the work of historians of masculinity and emotion with current feminist scholarship on 21st-century war in order to start fulfilling what is already a latent promise, the emergence of a historical as well as present-minded Critical Military Studies.

Duncanson is as important to Furneaux's organically-blended conceptual framework as scholars one might more readily expect to find in the introduction to a work of Victorian gender history – historians such as John Tosh, Graham Dawson, Joanna Bourke or Michael Roper, who all deserve to be read more widely by geographers and sociologists in CMS. (Tosh (2005) for his contribution to understanding the separation of home and battlefield through the prism of masculinities, even if scholars like Furneaux are now arguing that their

boundaries were more blurred; Dawson (1994) for his theorisation of identification with masculinity and military heroism through the popular culture of British imperial adventure narratives between the late 19th century and his own childhood; Bourke (1999) for a body of work including an agenda-setting and revisionist study of killing in war, themed around ‘intimacy’, which continues to draw the gendered ire of some traditionalist battlefield historians; and Roper (2009) for his psychoanalytically-informed study of soldiers’ letters, family ties and emotional survival in the First World War.) Furneaux both argues against earlier Victorianists’ division of the military and domestic into ‘separate spheres’ (p. 12) and implies that ‘the more tender and nurturing forms of soldiering that Duncanson sees as potentially transformative’ in the early 21st century ‘have a long, but unacknowledged, prehistory in the military man of feeling’, the gentle soldier during and after Crimea.

Furneaux herself often bridges the historic and contemporary. Her introduction moves from discussing the photographer Tim Hetherington and his capturing of US soldiers’ ‘range of affective experiences’ at the Restrepo outpost in Afghanistan – a set of images many readers of this journal will know – to using Eve Sedgwick to show how even a text such as ‘Charge of the Light Brigade’ actually engages in ‘contradictory emotional work’ (p. 25); the work of another feminist International Relations scholar, Julia Welland (2015), on how the figure of the ‘liberal warrior’ in Afghanistan operates ‘as part of the cultural concealment of war violence’ in 21st-century Britain informs Furneaux’s argument (directly before two chapters on the British soldier in Crimea as protector of children) that ‘[r]epresentations of the liberal warrior have a longer history, directly linked to the self-presentation of Britain as a liberating power’ (p. 85). The final chapter on soldier art and textiles, including sketches drawn and quilts made by soldiers in Crimea and the souvenirs of uniforms that comrades of fallen soldiers sent home, echoes the interest in material culture, aesthetic and creative methodologies that has enriched CMS and other fields of international politics research, and

Furieux's struggles with 'the pull – compelling, moving, ameliorating – of this material' (p. 26) trouble researchers in spectatorship and ethnography as well as the archives.

Where the argument could have gone further, and where gender historians of empire have already shown that it could go, is in making the implications of the post-Crimea 'gentle soldier' for imperialism and race explicit as well as implicit. Imperialisms in the 21st century have, after all, depended on attaching gentleness to certain racialised masculinities as a mark of liberal tolerance while removing the capacity for gentleness from others unless it is to infantilise them below the level of political subject (Agathangelou 2010; Richter-Montpetit 2014): . Empire is certainly present in its pages, especially in the military lives imagined by novelists like Thackeray, but the reality that the empire was where so much of Britain's military power and force after (and before) Crimea was being used is often tacit. It was not just war in general, but imperial violence in particular, about which Britons in the metropole could 'feel better' (p. 26) by sympathising with the figure of the gentle soldier and identifying with what it seemed to represent about the character of the British nation, creating personal investments in the civilising mission of empire both then and now. Nevertheless, *Military Men of Feeling* is much more than just a contribution to the history of its own period: by showing how attention to the emotional and sensory experiences of war, the interdependence of the battlefield and the home front, and the significance of public representations of militarism can be traced in past centuries as well as our own, it places contemporary and historic militarisms, and the thriving academic literatures on both of these, into a *longue durée* continuum that there is every scope to expand.

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