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Masculine State Terror: Narratives of Legitimising Violence and Monopolising Truth

This case study examines the United States Military Drone Programme through a feminist and post-colonialist lens and highlights the logic of masculine legitimacy used to justify violence for reasons of state and reasons of 'protection'. With reference to other pertinent examples of questionable state activities seemingly justified by a sovereign state's claim to a 'monopoly on violence' for the maintenance of 'public order' and 'sovereign borders', this article criticises the notion that state violence is inherently justified and points out the heteropatriarchal and colonialist nature of such an assertion. Narratives of justified state violence and masculine legitimacy will be deconstructed with reference to the concept of the human 'subject' and 'object' before this paper concludes that such narratives should be abandoned in order to seek a political, discursive and social space which does not preference the violence of white men over the safety of othered groups such as women and people of colour.

Keywords: feminism, state violence, Orientalism, terrorism, legitimacy

Introduction

Drawing on the feminist perspectives of theorists such as de Beauvoir, MacKinnon and Young, and the postcolonialist writings of Said and Mohanty, this article will first identify the power dynamics inherent to terroristic conflict and compare these dynamics to those between the masculinist state and its citizens; and between masculine and feminine perspectives, the former being situated as objective truth and the latter represented as a peripheral subjectivity. It will then examine why the notion of state terrorism is considered so oxymoronic and critique the patriarchal assertions of violent protection and masculine authority and domination used to preserve this consideration. Throughout, the United States' Drone Programme will be used as an illustrative example of the nature of state terrorism and how it is justified by violent, paternalistic understandings of safety and security.

It is important to understand the phenomenon of state terror through a feminist lens as it highlights the masculinised nature of state operations which

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present violence as ever justifiable or ultimately benevolent. A culture of toxic and hegemonic masculinities lends itself to these operations as it asserts that it is desirable to be a violent dominator; and that there somehow exists a natural binary of 'dominator' and 'dominated' – 'subject' and 'object'. Typically in patriarchal societies this binary is applied to men and women (as subject and object respectively), but Said's theory of Orientalism aids in discussing the ways these toxic masculinities also enable Western societies to position themselves as the subject to the object of other cultures (including, but by no means limited to, Middle Eastern societies and Indigenous cultures). A postcolonialist perspective, paired with a feminist analysis, allows for a deeper understanding of why Western state violence against the Middle East and against feminised and racialised communities within the West is so readily accepted.

Self and Other: Logics of Oppression and State Terror

Key to the logics of terror is the subject-object dichotomy. The following is a small excerpt from de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949), which offers some insights into her understandings of the complexities of subjectivity and objectivity; subject and object:

I used to get annoyed in abstract discussions to hear men tell me: 'You think such a thing because you're a woman.' But I know my only defence is to answer, 'I think it because it is true,' thereby eliminating my subjectivity; it was out of the question to answer, 'And you think the contrary because you are a man,' because it is understood that being a man is not a particularity... (de Beauvoir, 1949, p. 5)

There appears to be a dual phenomenon occurring here – women (and feminised 'Others' in general – I will develop this a little later in the article) are stripped of the objectivity and neutrality said to be inherent to the perspectives of men who, under patriarchy, have a monopoly on objectivity and neutrality. This results in the perspectives of women being robbed of any authenticity and attributed simply to the fact of her femininity ('you only think that because you are a woman'). Simultaneously, even if de Beauvoir attempts to win an argument by asserting her view as objective truth from the outset (as opposed to merely presenting her subjective view and hoping that it is not dismissed entirely), she risks losing her subjectivity and with it any credit for her perspective: she has to represent her view not as an authentic representation of her subjectivity but as something she has simply observed and regurgitated. Unlike men – any perspective she produces is an automatic reaction to her existence as female, and not the result of a process of critical thought and authentic experience. And in either case she is either reduced to an object passively observing the world with no valid thoughts or perspectives of her own, or the thoughts and perspectives she clearly does have are treated dismissively as though her femininity renders those perspectives both inevitable and naturally biased.

This all stems from the role of patriarchy in ascribing objectivity to men – as 'being a man is not a particularity' (de Beauvoir, 1949, p. 5), men have a monopoly on truth and objectivity. Men are then able to have subjectivities

without being treated as subjective or peripheral – these subjectivities are already seen as more innately valuable (read also: neutral; unbiased; untainted) and are consolidated as truth. It would be impossible for de Beauvoir to point out that the man's opinion is also informed by his gender and personal experiences, because such an assertion would seem ridiculous – masculinity cannot draw one's argument away from objectivity because masculinity defines objectivity. Hence toxic masculine and colonialist assertions (such as the necessity of violence and brutality or the requirement of a dominating entity to either save or defeat the Other – I will address this in more detail later) insert themselves into dominant discourses and logics while other logics remain subcultural and peripheral.

Other theorists, such as MacKinnon (1983, p. 363) and Mohanty (1984, p. 334) also explore the objectification of women and the female perspective, as well as this concept of “the Self” and “the Other”. Mohanty (1984, p. 334) also combines a feminist analysis with a post-colonialist analysis which critiques ‘Western feminism’¹ and demonstrates how ethnopatriarchy posits white colonisers as the masculinised subjects and the predominantly racialised communities being colonised as the feminised objects. With reference to the United States’ (and, by extension, most of the West’s) ‘War on Terror’, Middle Eastern perspectives are feminised (object) and Western perspectives are masculinised (subject), making the Western perspective more sympathetic – much like the male perspective. The violence committed by Western states in the Middle East is then downplayed; as the culpability of Western states for this violence is also downplayed. The objectivity crafted by western colonial narratives (read: patriarchal narratives) positions the Western perspective as objective in much the same way patriarchy positions the male perspective. As Maldonado-Torres writes:

New identities were created in the context of European colonization: European, white, Indian, black, and mestizo. A characteristic feature of this type of social classification is that the relation between the subjects is not horizontal but vertical in character. That is, some identities depict superiority over others. And such superiority is premised on the degree of humanity attributed to the identities in question. The ‘lighter’ one’s skin is, the closer to full humanity one is, and viceversa. (Maldonado-Torres, 2007, p. 244)

Such a concept is easily transferrable to other forms of identity including gender, religion, sexual orientation and gender diversity, disability status and so forth. The key identities being addressed in this article involve, most prominently, race and gender.

When discussing ‘subjects’ and ‘objects’ in relation to the ‘masculinised’ and ‘feminised’, it is important to note the violence embedded in the very nature of ethnopatriarchal constructions of the subject and of the Self. To colonialism, and to patriarchy, a (male) subject does not just act but forcefully exerts their will upon

¹ This critique regards the codifying of Others as non-Western and the subsequent othering of non-Western women by some western and mostly white feminists and does not attempt to create some monolith of ‘Capital ‘F’ Western Feminism which acts as a hypocritical oppressor. It merely points out the lack of appreciation for intersectionality among some feminists of the West.

the world and exists to conquer “the weak” (feminised; objectified). There are, as such, clear toxic masculinities inherent obviously to patriarchy, but also to colonialism – glorifying violence and domination while looking down on those who don’t are key to both systems.

‘Male’ or ‘masculine’ perspectives cannot only be held by men, but refer more so to the types of perspectives grounded in masculine logics. As such, women are of course also capable of exhibiting toxic and hegemonic masculinities like, for example, Margaret Thatcher (Freeman, 2013) who is widely regarded as someone who glorified self-interested dominance and merciless aggression. This is, of course, not to minimise the very real and serious misogynistic abuse levelled at Thatcher for her ‘mannishness’ and perceived lack of femininity², but rather to point out the way toxic and hegemonic masculinities (despite the impression the names give) are as much about attitudes and values as they are sex and gender. Other powerful women such as Julia Gillard and Hillary Clinton were targeted for similar reasons (Lynch, 2013). Patriarchy devalues women, but more specifically it devalues femininity. Under patriarchy, it is only by conforming to masculine roles and archetypes that women might be rendered subject, and even then this process also renders such women – as it did Thatcher – ‘mannish’ and ‘incorrect’ and underserving of humanity.

Power and Violence: Purpose of Terror

In defining terror, it is most important to look at the relationship between a terrorist, their targets and the message being sent. While an actual academic definition of terrorism is difficult to pin down (see, e.g., Greene, 2017; Hodgson and Tadros, 2013; Richards, 2014), it is generally accepted that terrorism involves a use of violence against a specific target for political purposes (Ward, 2018, p. 89), and is not restricted by a tie to any one perpetrator or ideology (Richards, 2012, p. 222). This definition will be appropriate for the purposes of this study. Additionally, Johnson (2008, p. 14) coined the term ‘intimate terrorism’ to refer to a type of domestic violence which involves one partner using coercive power over the other for the purpose of gaining and exerting control. The implication here being that terrorism is also about a very specific use of power – violent power wielded to quash resistance to a dominant regime or to force support for one’s own cause through the power and politics of fear.

The gendered implications of this idea cannot be understated either – a recent report from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare found that approximately one in six Australian women have experienced physical or sexual violence by a current or previous partner since the age of 15 (compared to one in 16 men) (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2018, p. 20). Constant associations within all aspects of society between men/masculinity and aggression/power (from things like extra-large ‘Mansize’ tissues (Picheta, 2018) to phrases like ‘man up’ used to mean ‘toughen up’ (Petter, 2018)) cast men as powerful dominators and masculinity as the path to domination. Power dynamics

² Comedian Hannah Gadsby subversively describes herself and other women who resist strict femininity as “incorrectly female” (Gadsby, 2018).

throughout society which position men as the perpetrators of violence and women as its 'victims' perpetuate narratives which normalise and even glorify men's violence and structure it into both our institutions and the state itself. Johnson's (2008, p. 14) discussion of "intimate terrorism" in this context highlights the nature of terroristic violence as an aggressive and manipulative power play which forces others to behave a certain way or think certain things out of fear; terror. To be sure, these dynamics harm men as well by creating an unrealistic standard of stolidity and insisting that men quash any emotional expression (Petter, 2018); but the most relevant point for this article is that these dynamics create a dominant-submissive dichotomy between men/the masculinised and women/the feminised.

Given a postcolonial feminist perspective, under patriarchy gender difference and gender inequality is defined by an inequality of social power and prevalence. The masculine perspective and existence and role are privileged over that of the feminine; and so the culpability of masculinised individuals and communities in their violence against feminised communities is downplayed as the masculine perspective takes on a more sympathetic role as the subject of the patriarchal narrative. Feminine suffering at the hands of this violence is similarly downplayed, as the feminine perspective takes on the less sympathetic role as object, as women themselves are objectified and dehumanised. As Mackinnon (1983, p. 636) writes, the male perspective '...enforces woman's definition...', and objectivity '...creates the reality it apprehends by defining as knowledge the reality it creates through its way of apprehending it'. Patriarchy creates and describes a male monopoly on perspective – an 'objectivity' which establishes the male perspective as pure truth and the female perspective as peripheral opinion. Heteropatriarchal conceptualisations of truth then cause severe gendered power discrepancies which 'require' a male dominator and a submissive female counterpart. Most importantly with respect to issues of state terror – masculine perspectives that tend to justify the use of violence for the sake of protection (based in paternalistic sentiments) are monopolised as truth through this same process. This forms the basis of a 'truth' which struggles to see states as capable of 'the wrong kind' of violence; a truth which situates certain violent (terroristic) state programs as the necessary and unavoidable actions of an ultimately benevolent (or at least neutral) masculine government.

Note the parallels between the objectivity of men's perspectives and the objectivity of a masculinised government. A state's actions – even violent actions – are viewed with the assumption of neutrality and legitimacy – it is not doing these things in any part because of any socio-political forces which influence its perspective (as women and the feminised do); it is doing them because it came to a rational conclusion based on a process of authentic and objective critical reasoning, so this is the best and only action to take. If 'being a man is not a particularity' (de Beauvoir, 1949, p. 5), then neither is being a Western state. Any competing views or arguments in relation to the state's actions are peripheral and must work almost unfathomably hard to prove their worth. In this way, the state is masculinised as it holds a monopoly on objectivity and purports to be the masculine subject of discourse, while all other actors – the populous, enemy states, insurgent actors, rebels, criminals, and especially feminised and racialised

communities – are feminine objects whose views are peripheral and subjectivities irrelevant if even existent.

As states assert a monopoly on truth and legitimacy, so do they assert a monopoly on 'legitimate' violence (Phillips, 2013, p. 84). As well as to the racialized and feminised communities of non-Western states, the othering and objectification integral to this process also operates in the context of terrorism against a state's own citizens. This is most notably achieved through a perversion of the purposes³ of criminalisation – the depiction of prison populations as a delinquent underclass underserving of rights, liberty, enfranchisement or a place in civilised society and therefore liable to wholesale exploitation and justifiable violence (Tiethof, 2016, p. 110). The criminalisation of dissenting views in Robespierre's France (see: the régime de la terreur (Mahan & Griset, 2008, p. 38)) or Stalin's Soviet Russia (see: the Gulag system (Zhukov & Talibova, 2018, p. 269)) are clear examples of the creation and/or proliferation of this underclass by states for the purposes of terror and exploitation, and to quash dissenting discourse. This returns us to a masculine logic of legitimacy and protection.

The US Drone Programme as State Terrorism

It is important to look at the United States' use of military drones in the Middle East through the lens of terror (and its subsequent justifications through the lens of a masculinised objectivity). Returning to the base definition of terrorism as targeted political violence, the violence committed by the United States is the looming threat of complete destruction at any moment and for no apparent reason (Rupka & Baggiarini, 2018, p. 345) – combined with the physical violence of when drone targets themselves are executed. The latter is a necropolitical⁴ violence of fear and is expanded by the 'hellfire' style of destruction engaged by drone missiles. This involves the complete annihilation of the body beyond recognition, stripping identity and personage from the target and proliferating a sense of horror (Debrix, 2017, p. 94). The targets of this violence are not only the persons of interest and suspected terrorists or terrorist affiliates who may be immediate physical targets (Sterio, 2018, p. 36), but also the people, including and most prominently innocent civilians, of the Middle East who are subject to the horror and necropolitical control associated with the presence of drones (Debrix, 2017, p. 95). The political purpose of the programme is, generally, to deter anti-Western radicalism (Sterio, 2018, p. 36).

Not only do the logics of toxic masculinity which attempt to justify and glorify violence for its own sake facilitate the terroristic nature of this programme, but it is the methods by which the U.S. seeks to physically enact this violence – both by summarily executing known or suspected anti-Western radical terrorists, and by 'making an example' of these targets for witnesses – which might also be

³ Note arguments promulgating that the primary purpose of imprisonment and incarceration is, in fact, not necessarily about community safety or justice but is, rather, about social control (e.g. Crenshaw, 2012, p. 1424).

⁴ This relates to the state's power to control life and death and the (il)legitimacy of that power. Other examples of state necropower include capital punishment and police authorisation to use lethal force/summary execution.

characterised as violent and terroristic. Take, for example, the three Afghani civilians who were the victims of the first targeted killing by the CIA in 2002 (Sifton, 2012); or, more recently, Pakistani Mamana Bibi who was singly executed by hellfire in front of her grandchildren (Rawlings, 2013). This targeted violence impacts, both directly and indirectly, more than the terrorists or suspected terrorists whom the U.S. executes, but the civilians who are too often mistakenly killed, and the witnesses who are subject to the ensuing horror.

There are, of course, other arguable examples of state terror (within and without the West), including arguments of Israeli terror in its treatment of Palestinians and others (Weaver, 2002, p. 53), Argentinian terror in its use of militaristic force against its own people during the Dirty War (Pion-Berlin and Lopez, 1991, p. 64; Scharpf, 2018, p. 209), and terror in Soviet Russia under Joseph Stalin (Zhukov & Talibova, 2018, p. 269). The policies which begat The Stolen Generation might also be considered an example of state terrorism, though perhaps not in the traditional sense. By subjecting Australia's First Nations peoples to profound violence and governmentality to push a political agenda which attempts to profess the supposed supremacy of white Europeans (or at the very least, an agenda which insists that a racially homogenous society is desirable), the Australian Government created laws easily comparable to terrorism as the very least. This having been a government which attempts to control not simply the way in which its citizens (or subjects, as it were) live, but where those persons live, who they live with and who raises them and teaches them their values by physically removing them from their existing homes and communities – attempting to wipe First Nations peoples of their subjectivities and instilling the pseudo-objectivity of white Catholicism instead. The genocidal and murderous nature (Mendelssohn, 2016) of England's invasion of the Australian continent in the 1700s has also been described as terroristic (Quilty, 2017). This is a biopolitical⁵ logic determined to use the subversive power of the state to establish white colonialism as the arbiter of truth itself; side-lining and in fact eliminating Indigenous and black subjectivities for the sake of white 'objectivity' in the process. In relation to the Indigenous peoples of America, Maldonado-Torres (2007, p.246) writes of the question about whether these peoples had 'soul' and identifies that this question was 'framed around the question of just war'. They also point out the way colonialism marks racialised subjects as "dispensable" and the 'fundamentally genocidal' attitude associated with this.

Masculinity and Legitimacy: State Justifications of Terror

Typically the state has immunised itself against accusations of terroristic violence by maintaining a positivist insistence that any violence it wields is 'legitimate' (Phillips, 2013, p. 84). Through the masculine state's power to control subjectivity itself, the premise of justified state violence is viewed as beyond critique as the masculine Western state remains the home of objectivity and truth. Mechanically and practically speaking, there are a few different methods through

⁵ Relating to the control of life and the nature of subjectivity through subjugation. The state uses subversive powers to establish the objective-subjective binary, and situate which subjectivities are established as objective truth and which remain peripheral.

which states establish this legitimacy in relation to their existing biopolitical and subversive powers.

Firstly, states may utilise the politics of invisibility and apathy to direct discourses on state violence towards depictions of a logical, humane and morally justified violence, and to proliferate a sense of apathy in those who might otherwise be critical of certain programmes, policies or acts of violence by states. Rupka and Baggiarini (2018, p. 354) write about the politics of invisibility and the dichotomy between the invisible nature of state terror (namely and most notably, drones, which occupy a limited space in public discourse (Ceccoli & Bing, 2015, p. 150)) and the highly visible nature of non-state terror (think September 11 (Bongiorno & Pennay, 2018), the Bali Bombings (Powell, 2017), more recent attacks in Brussels and Paris (McDonald-Gibson, 2017) and the Lindt Café siege in Sydney (Calderwood, 2017) – all featured heavily in news stories, with the September 11 attacks even forming a defining part of the Western cultural narrative coming into the 21st century (see, e.g., Liu et al., 2009, p. 687; Schüller, 2016, p. 626).

More pertinently to this analysis, this invisibility is also the result of the feminisation of Middle Eastern (or, simply non-Western) societies. The subjectification of the West contrasted against the objectification of racialised communities and nationalities leads to the former's interests being more sympathetic and therefore, for example, ranking higher on Butler's (2004, p. 32) 'hierarchy of grief'. This invisibilises the suffering and identity of victims of state terror (including targets of the drone programme) as their subjectivities are defined by the very state causing this suffering. Simultaneously, the fear of Jihadist terror held by Western states is made visible and sent to the front of the Western psyche, allowing for securitisation against this fear to take precedence over the actual lives and identities of the Other.

This invisibility helps the state characterise its violence as cold, logical, apolitical, non-performative and, ultimately, non-terroristic. It reinforces a narrative that talks about the state in terms of security, stability and governance (masculine) and talks about non-state terrorists as insecure, unstable and insurgent (read: emotional – feminine, racialised). Again, this connects to the racial/feminisation of the Other to cast such subjectivities as a particularity or the holders of these subjectivities as objects. The politics of invisibility also helps to reduce the strength of association between the state and violence in the mind of the public, making the issue of drones, for example, one of limited salience (Ceccoli & Bing, 2015, p. 150). But more importantly, it renders any such violence that the public do associate with the state as a means to an end; legitimately and coolly performed by the legitimate masculine subject. In a similar way, Ohl (2015, p. 613) describes the U.S. drone programme in terms of 'light war', arguing that the state uses deliberately boring rhetoric in discourse on the programme to subvert opposition and promote apathy, and to further dehumanise the victims of this war. This likely also has the effect of reinforcing the idea of an objective, unemotional, logical state violence.

Another related way that states circumvent discourses on terror is through the deployment of a specific masculinist logic in relation to protection and securitisation (Mohanty, 2011, p. 78; Roy and Singh, 2015, p. 320). That is, that states must be violent in order to reinforce their sovereignty and protect their citizenry. From this viewpoint, state violence cannot be terroristic as it operates to entrench sovereignty and stability (rather than create disruption and terror). This is the same way that freedom fighters (or arguable freedom fighters) and their supporters avoid terrorist discourses – their violence cannot be terroristic as it carries a moral justification in relation to its cause; a cause which seeks to overthrow a malevolent and significantly more powerful Goliath. But instead of presenting as a ‘David’, states present as a god – a paternalistic figure with an obligation to securitise and militarise itself for the protection of its citizens, legitimising the logic of masculine protection and the white saviour.

Young (2003, p. 3) discusses at some length the logic which positions masculinism as a form of protection. The ‘social contract’ between the state and its citizens (which suggests that the citizens should service, obey and submit to the state in exchange for the security and protection that the state offers) is clearly gendered in the sense that it builds on constructions of women/the feminised as needing to service and obey their protective male/masculinised dominator (Young, 2003, p. 5). This paternalistic tendency on the part of the Western state stems from its patriarchal and colonialist nature; a ‘chivalrous’ Western state which purports to slay the vicious, Eastern enemy to save its feminised populous from terror. It is through this logic that the state justifies its violence; and it is through this logic that the state often creates the very terror it presumes to destroy.

State violence may also be masked through a racialized and nationalistic system of othering. This Orientalist juxtaposition operates both with regard to the people against whom Western state violence is committed, and with regard to the non-state perpetrators of violence. In other words, the foreign victims of Western state violence are othered and dehumanised to minimise the scrutiny their treatment might face; and the ‘real’ terrorists are heavily Orientalised to minimise the association between the Western state and terrorism (Said, 1978, p. 26). Espinoza (2018, p. 382) discusses the Orientalist nature of the U.S. drone programme which justifies targeted killing and surveillance in the Middle East by dehumanising Muslim people and creating a barbaric, Arabic enemy. This is not unlike Butler’s (2004, p. 32) thoughts on the trivialisation of the loss of Palestinian lives – lives which would appear to sit low on the ‘hierarchy of grief’ (Butler, 2004, p. 32) in the Western psyche.⁶

Similarly, Rupka and Baggiarini (2018, p. 346) discuss the depiction of non-state terroristic violence as barbaric and insurgent – contrasted with a morally legitimised state violence. In fact, the entire ‘War on Terror’ narrative popularised if not coined by George W. Bush carries strong Islamophobic overtones (Beshara, 2018, p. 89), and while there are other political-cultural factors at play when it

⁶ And take, for example, Dussel’s (1993) work on Eurocentrism and its tendency towards treating the definition and relevance of non-European perspectives as ‘periphery’.

comes to anti-terror strategies and rhetoric employed in the West, it is this exact notion – that the only terrorists that exist are Jihadist and Islamic State – which steers discourse on terror away from the state and towards the Islamic community. As Anne Coulter (2001) so neatly put it, “Not all Muslims may be terrorists, but all terrorists are Muslims...” By driving discourse to insist that terrorism is synonymous with Jihadism (note: it is decidedly not (see, Piazza, 2017, p. 61; Richards, 2012, p. 222)), the U.S. and other Western forces are able to reinforce as narrative the impossibility of terrorism committed by a state – especially by a Western state.

Considering the way that objectivity is crafted not explicitly by some deliberate human mechanism, but implicitly as dominant (read: masculine; Western) perspectives automatically assert themselves as dominant narrative, which then morphs into an objectivity through (inter alia) an ignorance and apathy towards other, less dominating perspectives and truths, this system of othering is, of course, not necessarily deliberate or explicit on the part of the state. Rather, it already exists implicitly in relation to discourses on security, national identity and national values (Godden, 2006, p. 89), with more overt, tangible examples including certain participants in discourse portraying particular racial, ethnic or national communities as a threat to security, identity and values (see: Pauline Hanson: ‘swamped by Asians’ (Owens, 2015), and ‘swamped by Muslims’ (Norman, 2016); Fraser Anning’s ‘final solution’ on Muslim immigration (Karp, 2018)). The state appropriates this type of rhetoric to facilitate complicit acceptance on the part of the public as to the mistreatment, violence and even terroristic violence against members of these othered demographics (take, for example, Operation Sovereign Borders and the imprisonment of asylum seekers on Manus and Nauru, in which would-be refugees are stripped of their ‘personhood’ through the frames of war (Hodge, 2015, p. 127) – much in the same way the characterisation of a “War’ on Terror’ strips the victims of such a ‘war’ of their personhood).

Citizens accept the pretence of necessary violence for the sake of protection and security because this logic – this narrative – is interwoven through the fabric of our society (per the legitimised masculine subjectivity). Patriarchal, masculinist and colonialist constructions of violence as good, necessary, protective and honourable prefix a placid acceptance of state terror and violence under the guise of goodness, necessity, protection and honour. Masculine states capitalise on these constructions in order to justify their use of violence against citizens of the Middle East, against First Nations people of Australia, against citizens labelled delinquent and criminal.

Conclusion

Continuous representations of violence as a necessary evil, wielded only by the men of the state and done so in good faith for the protection of its citizenry perpetuate notions of toxic and hegemonic masculinity and preface a tacit acceptance of state terror and masculine destruction. States justify their violence through masculine logics, but also through destructive, colonialist narratives of othering, Orientalism and racism which simultaneously cast the ‘others’ as both

deserving of state terroristic violence and as the only true perpetrators of terrorism. It is a narrative that both victimises and vilifies the out-groups of western societies and reinforces a conceptualisation of masculine western states as innately superior. While citizens in patriarchal societies implicitly accept notions of state violence as just, necessary and effective against foreign threats (and further accept this violence as rightfully monopolised by men), masculine states will continue to capitalise on these pre-existing notions to further perpetrate violence under flimsy, paternalistic justifications.

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