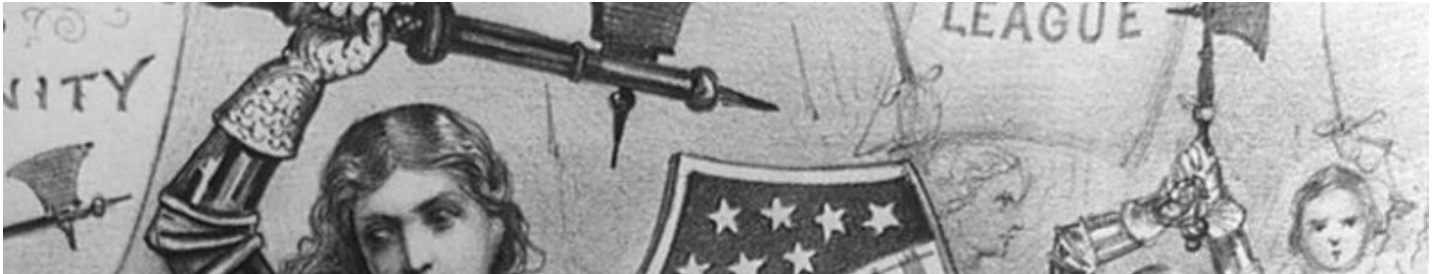


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Gender Debattled: Gender and War

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Editor

Prof. Dr. Beate Neumeier

University of Cologne
English Department
Albertus-Magnus-Platz
D-50923 Köln/Cologne
Germany

Tel +49-(0)221-470 2284

Fax +49-(0)221-470 6725

email: gender-forum@uni-koeln.de

Editorial Office

Laura-Marie Schnitzler, MA

Sarah Youssef, MA

Christian Zeitz (General Assistant, Reviews)

Tel.: +49-(0)221-470 3030/3035

email: gender-forum@uni-koeln.de

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About

Gender forum is an online, peer reviewed academic journal dedicated to the discussion of gender issues. As an electronic journal, *gender forum* offers a free-of-charge platform for the discussion of gender-related topics in the fields of literary and cultural production, media and the arts as well as politics, the natural sciences, medicine, the law, religion and philosophy. Inaugurated by Prof. Dr. Beate Neumeier in 2002, the quarterly issues of the journal have focused on a multitude of questions from different theoretical perspectives of feminist criticism, queer theory, and masculinity studies. *gender forum* also includes reviews and occasionally interviews, fictional pieces and poetry with a gender studies angle.

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Editorial: Gender Debat|tl|ed

By Karen Ikas, University of Würzburg, Germany

1 Examining the interrelations of women and war in a global context **Gender Debat|tl|ed**, the fifth issue of **gender forum**, looks at various aspects of representations and non-representations (cf. Walter Hölbling's essay) of women during wars and examines respective issues of nationalism, identity politics and gender construction as reflected in the literatures of Anglophone (USA, England, and Commonwealth) and Francophone cultures.

2 In the introduction to his critical anthology *War* Lawrence Freedman writes, "War is not a 'balanced' activity. It takes place at the extremes of human behaviour, social organization, and political relations" (8). Given this interpretation, we can further assess that "wars [...] had [and apparently still have] contradictory effects for gender roles and relations, entrenching traditional stereotypes and expectations while at the same time providing the conditions in which those old patterns might be disrupted and dissolved" as Joy Damousi and Marilyn Lake rightfully claim in "Warfare, history and gender" (1). This notion is supported by a wide array of publications in the field including Jean Bethke Elshtain's renowned *Women and War*, Lois Ann Lorentzen and Jennifer Turpin's *The Women and War Reader* and Joy Damousi and Marilyn Lake's *Gender and War* that show the multiple ways in which critics, artists and writers alike trace and uncover the complexity of gender and war. As these approaches reveal, women's roles in war still are twofold. On the one hand, women's roles are still likely to be couched to victimization and powerlessness in the public and critical discourse where women are reduced to stereotypes grounded in ideas about social class, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, and nationality. On the other hand, war gives women the opportunity to redefine themselves not as victims but as active agents. Various examples can be found that reveal how women fight back against various forms of oppression and respond in violent and non-violent ways to shape their own discourse of identity. Inscribing themselves in public and political discourse, they deconstruct the traditional concept that war is men's business only. Two of the most recent examples from very different fields indicate the alterations currently underway and the promises thereof to change the ways we think about gender and war: Beatrice Heuser, the first woman to be appointed as executive director of the MGFA, the most renowned research institute on military history in Germany, and the female Afghan pop group "Burka Band" and their playful postmodernist take on gender construction and war in Afghanistan, in their music-masquerade "Burka Blue."

3 In his article, "Texans, War Fever, and the Absence of the Female" Walter W.

Hölbling (Graz) takes the events of 9-11 as a starting point to discuss the striking "absence of women in moments of national crisis and a male-dominated war discourse in the United States." Comparing Norman Mailer's novel *Why Are We in Vietnam?* (1967) to G.W. Bush's State of the Union and other public addresses in 2002 he identifies the absence of a female principle as a major cause for individual and institutional violence in both, fictive and non-fictive discourses. My own article "A Message to the Emperor & The Battle of the Cradle" considers multiple Anglophone discourses including posters, political texts, short stories and drama from various nations involved in the Great War like England, Australia, South Africa, and the USA to examine the role of gendered nationalism and identity politics in regional, national and international contexts in the first global warfare. As the article further shows, war writings by women such as Marion Craig Wentworth's "War Brides" can be seen as documents demonstrating the strength and importance of private passion as a form of opposition to political control. The intersection of nations, literatures, and histories is looked at from another angle in Annedith Schneider's (Istanbul, Turkey) illuminative account of women and war in the Francophone Arabic hemisphere. In "Narrating Women and the Algerian War" Schneider traces how "women's war narratives require the reader to redefine what it means to be a participant in a war and thus to have a legitimate role in rebuilding the nation." As the volume transgresses into non-English and non-Western nations as well it aims to initiate a truly international debate and hopes to stimulate more and additional studies on the subject. Finally, Silvia Vance (Alberta, Canada) takes us back to the 1930s and "on the knife-edge of time," as already the title of her article indicates. While considering various other texts of the time like Virginia Woolf's *Three Guineas* and *A Room of One's Own* in her article as well, Vance concentrates on Naomi Mitchinson's polemic *The Moral Basis of Politics* and Katherine Burdekin's *Swastika Night* to trace how these texts emphasise the nature of the gender divide as essentialised through war.

4 While all the articles in **Gender Debat|t|led** acknowledge patterns of difference in men's and women's relationship to war, they also point at human conceptions of war and cross-cultural gender arrangements to move beyond the simplistic gender dichotomies and the traditional debate of militarist men and pacifist women. In conclusion, this special issue suggests a non-essential and interdisciplinary gender-sensitive debate to further unravel the complexity of war and women as it is reflected in various other literary and non-literary texts.

5 In the fiction section, **Gender Debat|t|led** presents "Goombay Smash," a short story by the award-winning Canadian writer Jane Eaton Hamilton. Jane has also fought for the same-sex marriage in Canada with considerable success. In addition, there are reviews of

recent theatrical and dance performances in London at the Globe, the Royal Court and Sadlers Wells. Finally, reviews of recent publications by Dimple Godiwala, Paulina Palmer and Penelope Deutscher complete this issue.

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"A Message to the Emperor" & "The Battle of the Cradle": Gendered Nationalism and Identity Politics in the Great War

By Karin Ikas, University of Würzburg, Germany

Abstract:

Olive Schreiner, an outstanding feminist, political activist and prose writer from South Africa, is one of those remarkable late 19th century English cultured women who locate themselves within and beyond the categories of war, peace, empire and nation. In refusing to accept 'all the boundaries, dichotomies, and divisions, which are the hallmark of sexist society' she aims to 're-make art and society' as Liz Stanley rightfully observes (235). [...] Most interesting in the context of gender and war is her claim for an ultimate deconstruction of any fixed socio-cultural and sexual identity. In acknowledging the interaction of parameters like ethnicity, culture, social status, setting, class and gender in traditional concepts of identity construction, Schreiner envisions a universal identity and acknowledges that this can only be achieved through a prior dismantling of all boundaries and borderlines, especially those which limit women's freedom and liberty in the private, regional, national and international sphere.

It is our intention to enter into the domain of war and to labor there till in the course of generations we have extinguished it. (Olive Schreiner, *Woman and Labour* 69)

1 At the outbreak of the Great War writer Hilda M. Freeman, an Australian and British citizen, found herself stranded in Germany. In her travelogue *An Australian Girl in Germany: Through Peace to War* (1916) she describes her war experiences as follows:

[...] I am suffering from a very bad attack of Suppressed Conversation. Of course, everyone knows that it is a dreadful thing for a woman to have a great deal to say and to be unable to say it. To me, here [Germany], speech is practically impossible. There is only one topic of conversation - the war - on that subject I must be dumb. [...] I can think, even if I must not speak. (46)

Freeman's choice of tactical silence to survive in the enemy's country, her determination to continue thinking about war along with Schreiner's theoretical reflections in the beginning prove politicians and historians of the time wrong who claimed that "[...] warfare is [...] the one human activity from which women, with the most insignificant exceptions, have always and everywhere stood apart" (Keegan 75). Nowadays we know of a great number of female war writing which documents in its variety and broad scope of issues covered how women take a stand and are involved in defining the categories of war and peace.¹ Inscribing

¹ For recently published primary sources regarding women and the Great War in English cf. Sharon Ouditt's insightful bibliography *Women Writers of the First World War* (2000). For anthologies containing first-hand accounts of women's written Great War Experiences see Angela Smith. *Women's Writing of the First World War: An Anthology* (2000). Moreover, Margaret R. Higonnet (ed.). *Lines of Fire: Women Writers of World War I* (1999), which covers the broadest range of women's war writing from all over the world in English and foreign languages, with English translations for the non-native English sources. Then, Susan R. Grayzel (ed.). *Women and the First World War* (2002), Joyce Marlow (ed.). *The Virago Book of Women and the Great War* (1999);

themselves into war history, women writers and activists of the Victorian and Edwardian Age, for example, remind us that it would be too short-sighted to claim that "during the period of high imperialism most [English language] writers saw it as their bounded duty to sing the glories and responsibilities of Empire" as Chris van der Merwe and Michael Rice argue (12-13).

2 Olive Schreiner, an outstanding feminist, political activist and prose writer from South Africa, is one of those remarkable late 19th century English cultured women who locate themselves within and beyond the categories of war, peace, empire and nation. In refusing to accept "all the boundaries, dichotomies, and divisions, which are the hallmark of sexist society" she aims to "re-make art and society" as Liz Stanley rightfully observes (235). Of particular interest is Schreiner's theoretical treatise *Woman and Labour* (1911), widely acknowledged as a very influential feminist text of the time (see Schoeman, Krebs). Here, she does not only ask for an elimination of gender inequality, or as she puts it, "the falling of the last wall that encloses artificially the activity of woman and divides her from man" (Schreiner 117). Rather, in pointing at the masculinity of women and the femininity of men on the one hand, but also at the interdependence of the sexes on the other hand she aims at "a movement of the sexes towards a closer union" (103) in all her fictive, theoretical, political and personal writing. Most interesting in the context of gender and war is her claim for an ultimate deconstruction of any fixed socio-cultural and sexual identity. In acknowledging the interaction of parameters like ethnicity, culture, social status, setting, class and gender in traditional concepts of identity construction, Schreiner envisions a universal identity and acknowledges that this can only be achieved through a prior dismantling of all boundaries and borderlines, especially those which limit women's freedom and liberty in the private, regional, national and international sphere. In the respective chapter on "Woman and War" she argues:

If our European nations should continue in their present semi-civilised condition, which makes war possible, or a few generations longer, it is highly possible that as financiers, as managers of the commissariat department, as inspectors of provisions and clothing for the army, women will play a very leading part; and that the nation which is the first to employ its women may be paced at a vast advantage over its fellows in time of war. (66)

3 In her belief, that social progress and a peaceful future can only be ensured once women's emancipation is established and women are given unlimited opportunities for self-development in a modern world, Schreiner lays the groundwork for U.S. American

Agnès Cardinal et. al. (eds.). *Women's Writing on the First World War* (1999). Of particular interest are also genre-specific volumes like Catherine Reilly (ed.). *Scars Upon My Heart: Women's Poetry and Verse of the First World War* (1981) and Claire M. Tylee et. al. (eds.). *War Plays by Women: An International Anthology* (1999).

playwright Marion Craig Wentworth, who takes up the issue of women, war and pacifism in a similar vein. Moreover, both join the ranks of other English-language women writers from Edith Wharton (*Fighting France*, 1915), New Zealand-born Katherine Mansfield ("An Indiscreet Journey", 1915, "The Fly", 1922), Canadians Mary Borden (*A Diary Without Dates*, 1918) and Francis Marion Beyon (*Aleta Day*, 1919) to Helen Zenna Smith (*Not So Quiet ... Stepdaughters of War*, 1930) and American Gertrude Stein (*Wars I have Seen*, 1945) as well as activists such as Emily Hobhouse (see *Boer War Letters*), Millicent Garrett Fawcett (*What I remember*, 1924) and others.² Transgressing geographical, political and cultural borders as writers, travellers, professionals and artists in the early 20th century, these women approach major political issues and military conflicts of the time such as the South African War (1899-1902), also known as the Second Anglo-Boer War³, and the European based Great War (1914-18) from trans-national angles in multiple discourses. Their intriguing and quite provocative though highly influential outsider perspectives, e.g. Emily Hobhouse's *Boer War Letters*. Emily Hobhouse, a writer, humanitarian and political activist from England, went to South Africa to examine the situation of captured Boer Women and children in the British concentration camps there. In her own writing and through the publication of a collection of *Boer War Letters*, which consists of letters written by imprisoned Boer War women translated (from Afrikaans into English) and edited by Hobhouse, she revealed the British atrocities in the concentration camps of South Africa to an international audience and forced the British government to ultimately rethink its war strategy.⁴ The publication is very insightful here, further reminding us that "besides analyzing war through the lens of gender, we must also explore the global intersections between gender and class, race, nation and ethnicity", as Jennifer Turpin rightly concludes in "Many Faces: Women Confronting War" (4).

4 Marion Craig Wentworth's play *War Brides* (1915), for instance, discusses how gendered imagery, sexual difference and maternity have been employed in wartime Europe to constitute nation-ness in terms of group coherence that defies any subjectivity and individuality. This essay applies a gender-sensitive approach to analyse how nationalism, gender roles and identity politics are intertwined and how they relate to the protection of the home-front in the play. Before focussing on Wentworth's drama, I will look at female war participation in the Great War in general to shed light on how women have been targeted by

² See among others also E. Sylvia Pankhurst, Adela Pankhurst, Enid Bagnold, and Virginia Woolf. For critical approaches see Nelson Wattie; Suzanne Raitt and Trudi Tate; Anne Varty; Joy Damousi and Susan Lake. Some of the fore-mentioned primary works can also be found in *Her War Story: Twentieth Century Women Write About War*. Ed. Sayre P. Sheldon (1999) and *My Country is the Whole World: An Anthology of Women's Work on Peace and War*. Ed. Cambridge Women's Peace Collective (1984).

³ For the Anglo-Boer War see in particular Olive Schreiner, Emily Hobhouse, Millicent Garrett Fawcett.

⁴ See Rykie van Reenen.

war propaganda as war brides and mothers for the nation state and how ambitious they have been to assert subjectivity and transgress the wartime mobilization of manipulative gender imagery.

5 Now, as contemporary theoreticians like V. Spike Peterson argue,

gender refers not to anatomical or biological distinctions but to the social constructions, which is [*sic*] always culturally specific, of masculine and feminine as hierarchical and oppositional categories. Symbols, theories, practices and individuals are gendered, meaning that their characteristics can be associated with, or construed as manifestations of, masculinity or femininity. (48)

This constructed gender division is most evident in Western societies in times of war as critics like Marilyn Lake, Joy Damousi, Marin Van Creveld and Jean Bethke Elshtain among others have repeatedly outlined in their studies. Their respective findings are aptly summarised by U.S. American political scientist Francine D'Amico who writes: "That we even need to talk about 'women and war' underscores the gendering of our construct of war. War has been perceived as men's domain, a masculine endeavour for which women may serve as victim, spectator, or prize. Women are denied agency, made present but silenced" (119). The war diary of American writer Ellen La Motte, one of the first American nurses serving in the French battlefields, substantiates D'Amico's argument:

It is the Nation's war, and all the men of the Nation, regardless of rank, are serving. [...] Women can come into the War Zone, but wives cannot. Wives, it appears, are bad for the morale of the Army. [...] They establish the connecting link between the soldier and his life at home [and] mean responsibility. [...] Women / [W]omen only mean distraction and amusement, just as food and wine. [...] So she herself must be censored. (162)

6 La Motte's observation is further consolidated once we call to mind that when writing about the Western nations in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, historians usually refer to the nation or nation state as a form of political organization, or to the concept of nation-ness, that is, an integrate idea providing a focus for collective identity.⁵ When we look at the nation-state and the role of women and men as citizens and participants in national, political and economic struggles in that context, it appears that until today men and women are perceived in significantly different ways (see Anthias and Yuval-Davis). What is more, as Claire M. Tylee observes, historians such as Paul Fussell perpetuate the myth of the "men-only-construction of the Great War" (7) to deny women any decisive participation in their

⁵ See Gleason 213-234 and Anderson. Also Hutchinson and Smith's volume which consists of an array of 49 key texts on nation and nationalism in general. It provides insightful information on the origin of the term, differentiating concepts, key representatives and historical developments; however, with just one article on "Women and the Nation-State" by Flora Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis (312-316) it does not do full justice to the expanding field of research on Gender and Nationalism and thus hints at the need for a greater acknowledgement of the issue beyond feminist and women studies departments.

national culture.⁶ Elaborating on this, Jennifer Turpin traces a gender-hierarchical structure that underlies any construction of nation-ness in times of war: Women should behave in maternal fashion, they should need men to protect them, and their wartime experience should be sexualised. Men should feel that in order to prove their masculinity they should fight and generally support their nation going to war. Men should take on exceptionally masculine behaviours and attitudes through their military training. (16)

7 Chicago political scientist Jean Bethke Elshtain points at two respective symbols that bear witness to this traditional gender division in Western societies during the war: Men are seen as "Just Warriors" while women are identified as "Beautiful Souls" (4). As Bethke Elshtain rightfully argues, these tropes are rather narrow, one-sided, and unreal and do not comply with the complexity and diversity of real war experiences of men and women. Her observation has been taken up by critics like Sandra Gilbert, Lois Ann Lorentzen, Jennifer Turpin, Sharon Ouditt, Sharon Abbey, Andrea O'Reilly and others. According to their studies women are not only socialized into traditional female roles in a private context, e.g. as obedient daughters, submissive wives and nurturing mothers, but they are also expected to shoulder national and patriarchal responsibilities in wartime. In Britain alone, for example, about eighty thousand women served in so-called women's forces during the Great War period. This is not to suggest, however, that women in non-traditional uniforms, that is beyond the scope of nurses, ambulance drivers, etc. in Voluntary Aid Detachments (VADs), were also accepted or at least tolerated. On the contrary, women in combat were not tolerated at all. Flora Sandes is one of the few documented women who manage to transgress the traditional gender divide in the First World War. Sandes uses cross-dressing to enter the supposedly male sphere of war at the battle-front. As historian Joanna Bourkes puts it, she thus "turn(s) from a woman [and VAD] to a private soldier" while fighting as a sergeant-major in the Serbian army. Nevertheless, she remains an exception to the rule, as Bourke shows in "Women and the military during World War One."⁷ In all, the ideal female citizen was still viewed as nurturing, submissive and pacifist, provided that the latter did not interfere with nationalist interests. Quite paradoxically though, war propaganda linked motherhood, nationalism, and militarism to indoctrinate women to be patriotic, loyal and even pacifist as daughters, wives and mothers; however, it also urged them to work in munitions factories and thus support militarization for the sake of the nation (see Woollacott, Elshtain and Tobias).

⁶ See Tylee. Also Fussell.

⁷ Flora Sandes wrote and published the documentary *An English Woman Sergeant in the Serbian Army* (1916) which tells about her experiences in the Serbian forces. The book was written out of interest to raise money for the Serbian army and not primarily to bring a female perspective to a traditionally male domain, the combatant experience on the frontlines.

8 Public and political debates within the nations involved in the Great War centered upon this double standard. The ambivalent imagery of morale, morality, and sexuality was enhanced by a respective media propaganda. Two contrasting presentations of women appear frequently, firstly, women were shown as loyal wives and mothers who follow their patriotic duties, that is support conscription, entice their men to go off to the war, keep the home-fires running themselves, etc.; secondly, portrayals of women as loose, sexually available and even prostitute-like mannequins functioned to sell the war to men. Numerous postcards and billboard posters as well as advertisements and articles in the popular press and film provide enough evidence for this objectification of women in the context of war propaganda. The main purpose was to lure men to the battle-zone and women into blind civil obedience and fervent patriotism. To fully acknowledge the importance of this so-called information culture of the street (Roberts 168), one may recall briefly that the whole period of 1890 to 1918 is generally acknowledged as the Golden Age of posters, advertisements, picture postcards, cigarette cards, juvenile journals and popular magazines. In the Great War Period all this material lay ready to hand for state propaganda. Soon, most of it was strongly bent to national war efforts and devoted to patriotic and military ends as John M. Mackenzie points out in *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion 1880-1960* (17). This can be seen in a wide range of propaganda postcards, billboard and wall posters in which colorful alluring imagery is used to appeal to men and women with slogans such as:

"Is your Home Worth Fighting for? It will be too late to Fight when the enemy is at your door so Join today." (Poster by Peel, Dublin)

"Women of Britain say - Go!" (Poster by E. Kealy)

"Gee!!! I Wish I were A Man - I'd Join the Navy: Be a Man and Do It - United States Navy Recruiting Station." (Poster by Howard Chandler Christy)⁸

"To the Women of Britain: Some of your men folk are holding back on your account. Won't you prove your love for your country by persuading them to go?"⁹

9 A billboard advertisement for recruiting women for the Voluntary Aids Detachment (V.A.D.) provides a very revealing insight as to the traditional roles assigned to women beyond the scope of motherhood and maternity. Featuring three nurses who pose in front of a wall that is dominated by an oversized red cross and the names of "France, Italy, Malta, Gibraltar, Saloniki, Egypt, Mesopotamia, Holland, Switzerland and Russia" as possible task locations, it reads: "V.A.D. - Nursing Members, Cooks, Kitchen Maids, Clerks, House-Maids, Ward-Maids, Laundresses, Motor-Drivers - All Urgently Needed" (Imperial War Museum,

⁸ Cf. "World War I Poster collection" in the Imperial War Museum in London.

⁹ See Robert Opie (ed.), *The 1910s Scrapbook: The Decade of the Great War* (2000).

London, PST 3268).

10 While the commodification of gender and sexual imagery to constitute a national group coherence and enhance a patriotic and patriarchal warfare is quite obvious and explicit in all the prior cases, it could be more implicit and rather difficult to trace once ethnic, racial and religious contexts are put into consideration as well. In all, a broad range of backgrounds and experiences of women in regional, national and international locations requires any study on women, war and the nation to move beyond essentialism, universalism and simplistic gender dichotomies. Rather than assuming homogeneity and unity among women, diversity and difference have to be acknowledged. In *Women-Nation-State*, Flora Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis put it as follows:

When we discuss the ways women affect and are affected by national and ethnic processes within civil society, and the ways these relate to the state, it is important to remember that there is no unitary category of women which can be unproblematically conceived as the focus of ethnic, national or state policies and discourse. (7)

11 What is more, Jean Bethke Elshtain's important analysis entitled "The Discourse of War and Politics: From the Greeks to Today" (1987) as well as V. Spike Peterson's research provide enough convincing evidence to claim that conventional notions of nationalism are rooted in patriarchy and gender hierarchy. In fact, nationalism therefore constitutes a decisive part of a power structure that privileges men over women.¹⁰ In Spike Peterson's words:

Nationalism is gendered in terms of how the naturalization of domination ('us' at the expense of 'them') depends upon the prior naturalization of men/masculinity over women/ femininity. In this sense, taking domination as natural obscures its historical context and disables our knowledge of and attempts to transform hierarchical relations. (44)

12 In pointing at the politics of reproduction as a crucial aspect of gendered nationalism that needs to be re-assessed Sylvia Walby (1997) and Jill McCalla Vickers (1990) have opened up the possibilities for such a gender-sensitive reconsideration of nationalism. Both critics claim that the traditional politics of reproduction has two focal points: "the battle of the cradle," in which women are viewed as biological producers, and "the battle of the nursery," in which they are targeted as social producers (Vickers 485). In both categories women's autonomy and freedom of choice is limited and aligned to national patriarchal interests. It could be claimed with Spike Peterson that "the battle of the cradle is about regulating under what conditions, when, how many, and whose children women will bear" while "the battle of the nursery" focuses upon the social role of women and "involves the ideological

¹⁰ For more recent analysis of nationalism and gender see among others Enloe and Sutton; Spike Peterson (1992); Gleason (1991) Also the special issue of Gender and History entitled "Gender, Nationalism and History" (Summer 1993).

reproduction of group members" (43). Vickers views the battle of the cradle as a battle over women's sexual reproduction and the battle of the nursery as a battle over identities and loyalties (483).

13 In the context of war and thus in a situation where women face particular pressures to support the nation by complying to their role as biological and social producers of community and nationhood, this is even more complex. Quite often it seems as if the "deep horizontal comradeship" (Anderson 7) of national allegiance can only be realized under pressure from outside. This implies that during war customary and traditional forms of behavior are temporarily suspended for the benefit of a greater cause. Furthermore, it happens that quite unrelated and dissimilar people are united as one community of brothers and sisters until victory is achieved. However, within such a presumably unified community, subjectivity is hardly possible to attain. In fact, it is rather viewed as a deviance from the norm and as such severely sanctioned. What is more, as F. Anthias and N. Yuval-Davis point out in *Woman-Nation-State*, even if the establishment of group coherence and national unity should go along with a presumably equal treatment of all citizens by the state, it will "not necessarily lead to the destruction of a sexual division of labor in society more generally. Notions of what are specifically women's needs or duties often reassert themselves in very traditional ways even in revolutionary societies" (11). Thus, the state is constituted in a gendered way, that is "as essentially male in its capacities and needs" (7). None the less, as Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis point out in their conclusion, "the state does not exclusively construct gender divisions nor can they be seen only in the context of any specific state mechanisms at any historical moment as they relate to the whole area of gender differentiation" (316). As illustrated earlier, the various positions women held in the past show that women ultimately defy traditional gender dichotomies and take an active stand to modify their roles and re-conceptualize ideology, society, and nationalism.

14 U.S. American playwright Marion Craig Wentworth uses the subversive and politicized environment of theatre to examine these issues on stage. She was born in Minnesota in 1872, studied at the University of Minnesota and the Curry School of Expression in Boston, and worked as a teacher of expression. As a devoted social activist and suffragist, Wentworth was very much involved in the American Women's Suffrage Campaign and gave passionate speeches and enthusiastic recitals of Elizabeth's Robin's suffrage play *Votes for Women*. These experiences combined in an intersection of political drama, propaganda and agitation that is evident in several plays she wrote on social and women's issues. Her suffrage drama *The Flower Shop* (1912), for example, has a quite successful

performance history in Britain and the United States. In the later play *War Brides* she focuses on political action and private lives alike to take an anti-war and pro-pacifist stand. Centering upon the archetypal myth of the American Mom in the Great War, she reveals how nationalism and social constructivism are intertwined to channel women's and men's traditional role within patriotic and gendered warfare. However, in setting the action in an unspecified country in war-torn Europe, Wentworth does not limit herself to the USA and thus a home-front experience devoid of direct warfare. Instead, she transgresses national confinements and points at the popularized image of maternal womanhood which dominated the ideological front of a western world torn apart by war. Appealing to an alternative notion of gender revision in the end, she aims at deconstructing the traditional concept of femininity as passive, nurturing, and submissive, as the latter has only been re-iterated to deny women any agency in the nation and the conduct of war.

15 At first glance, the social world Wentworth's one-act play presents is united by nationalism and imperialism, the need for wartime sacrifice and the desire for victory in a kind of universal setting. The action takes place in "a war-ridden country [where] the war brides were cheered with enthusiasm and the churches were crowded when the large wedding parties spoke the ceremony in concert" (16). While national war interest requests group coherence and community spirit instead of individualization, it also supports women's access to the labor market. In the opening scene the significance of women's equal participation at the home front is emphasized:

[...] Through the open door [of the peasant cottage] may be seen women stacking grain. Others go by carrying huge baskets of grapes or loads of wood and gradually it penetrates the mind that all these workers are women [...]. There is everywhere the tense atmosphere of unusual circumstance, the anxiety and excitement of war. (16)

This visualization implies that the conditions for women at home has indeed changed and the strict division between the outer, public, "masculine" world and the private, domestic, "woman's" world that marked the life of the middle and upper middle class Victorian society, has been eroded. And indeed, the introduction continues: "[...] gradually it penetrates the mind that all these workers are women, aristocrats and peasants side by side" (16). Nevertheless, closer analysis reveals that Wentworth does not draft a picture of women's liberation in the context of a nation leading war. Nor does she verify the thesis of her contemporary, the American writer and journalist Mabel Potter Daggett who went to Europe before the US entered the Great War and stated in her report on the female war experience: "[...] I think we may write it down in history that on August 4, 1914, the door of the Doll's House opened - For the shot that was fired in Serbia summoned men to their most ancient

occupation - and women to every other" (2).¹¹ In fact, Wentworth's depiction of women in the play rather suggests the opposite. Most female characters relate to home, matrimony and motherhood as their primary duties. They adopt traditional female roles enthusiastically, willingly or at least half-heartedly and do not care that their loyalty is ultimately employed by the state for nationalist purposes. Minna, one of the war brides, puts it as follows: "I'd rather be a wife or a widow any day than be an old maid; and to be a war bride - oh!" (19). And with regard to her "war bridegroom" she states: "He's all right. He's a soldier now. [...] I probably wouldn't have picked him out in peace-times, but it is different now. [...] it's for the country. We'll be famous, as war brides. Even the name sounds glorious, doesn't it? War bride!" (18).

16 What is more, not even the protagonist's sister Amelia, who demonstrates a certain degree of independence and freedom and thus transgresses some traditional gender roles, is finally able to leave the doll's house. The ultimate disruption of the earlier feminist mood takes place once the mother figure, a very traditional, strict, unyielding and patriotic character, occupies center stage. By linking up the description of the mother's characteristics with the impact it has on the daughters Wentworth reveals the dilemma of the younger women, namely the daughters Amelia and Hedwig. The stage directions put it as follows: "She is old and work-worn, but sturdy and stoical. [...] She casts a sharp eye at Amelia" (16). All of a sudden, the "determined air" (16) in Amelia's behavior turns to subordination. Amelia's "downcast eyes" (16) express the impact of the maternal gaze to condition the deviant daughters and urge them to adopt the traditional female roles defined by a patriarchal system. The mother is further convinced that during war female identity and subjectivity has to be completely submitted to male-defined national interests and the aim of winning the war. She goes even further in claiming that women's prior duty is to use her reproductive capacity and give birth to new citizens to secure the home front:

Mother: It is for the fatherland, Amelia. Aye, aye, the masters have said so. It is the will and judgment of those higher than us. They are wise. Our country will need children. Aye. Say yes, my daughter. You will not say no when your country bids you! It is your emperor, your country, who asks, more than Hans Hoffman. (19)

With this interpretation of the mother as thorough patriot who plays a crucial role in raising her children as obedient and subservient citizens, Wentworth exposes mothers as agents of state propaganda, that is as ferocious participants in various nationalist wartime maneuvers along an ideological front line, a scheme the playwright's contemporary, Canadian feminist writer Francis Marion Beyon, identifies as "national motherhood" in "Answers to an Anti-Suffragist," a well-received article in the Canadian newspaper *Guide* (1 October 1913, XII).

¹¹ In that context see also Clarke and Gallagher. In addition, see Doty.

17 Drawing upon the mobilization of mothers and maternal imagery to garner support for the war effort, Wentworth recognizes the productive cycle as site of oppression in women's lives and as a decisive feature of gendered nationalism. This is in line with Heather Ingman's assertion that "Far from being inborn and unchanging, mothering is shaped by the society in which mothers live and in turn daughters are brought up by their mothers to fit into their particular society's understanding of womanhood" (1). A major conflict for the protagonist is to thwart the social-constructivism of traditional gender roles as it is persistently perpetuated by flat characters such as the traditional war bride Minna, and the Mother. Their uncritical pro-patriarchal and pro-war attitude facilitates the nation's re-enforcement of gender-inequality in an emergency case like war. Subsequently, it is not merely a patriarchal war the protagonist fights but also a war against female liberation. Right from the beginning Wentworth leaves no doubt about Hedwig's ambition, vigor and conviction to meet these challenges and fight for women's liberty, as the protagonist's first appearance on stage reveals:

Enter Hedwig. She stands in the doorway looking out on the distant crowds [of warbrides and marching men]. She is tall, well built, and carries herself proudly. Strong, intelligent features, but pale. Her eyes are large with anxiety. She has soft, wavy black hair. An inward flame seems to be consuming her. The sounds continue in the distance, cheering, disputing mingled with far bugle-calls and marching feet. Hedwig (contemptuously): Ha! War Brides! [...] A breeding machine. (They all draw back) Why not call it what it is? Speak the naked truth for once. (18)

Hedwig's depiction in the first tableau classifies her not just as a rebel but, as I would like to argue, as a femme fatale. According to Patrick Bade's definition the femme fatale shows the following characteristics:

They are pale, proud, mysterious, idol-like, full of perverse desires yet cold at heart. The link between eroticism and death is always present, as is an atmosphere of perverse cruelty which became increasingly intense as the century drew to a close. For many artists, it hardly mattered whether they painted Helen of Troy, Judith or Morgan-Le-Fay. The subject was always perceived in the same terms: women as malignant, threatening, destructive and fascinating (8-9).

Read this way, Hedwig's mysterious beauty, her alluring fatal attractiveness and her transgression and disobedience epitomize her as femme fatale. At the same time, however, Wentworth's heroine deviates from the prototypical notion of a femme fatale in that she leads a life dominated by resistance and victimization alike in a war context. She does not use her mysterious beauty to lure men and women to the battlefields, but rather to keep them out of it and make up a home-front of resistance and deviance against national war propaganda and belligerent state actions. She warns state authorities to kill the baby in her womb if war does

not stop immediately and women are given participation in politics and national affairs. In addition, she requests other women to also resist a gendered nationalist propaganda mechanism as the latter reduces women's civic role to that of reproduction and thus the perpetuation of a patriarchal nation-state. How she views the impact of war on women precisely can be seen in her conversation with the military official Hoffmann:

Hedwig: [...] Oh, it is an insult to our womanhood! You violate all that makes marriage sacred! Are we women never to get out of the dust? You never asked us if we wanted this war, yet you ask us to gather in the crops, cut the wood keep the world going, drudge and slave, and wait, and agonize, lose our all, and go on bearing more men - and more - to be shot down! If we breed the men for you why don't you let us say what is to become of them? Do we want them shot- the very breath of our life? Hoffmann: It is for the fatherland. Hedwig: You use us, and use us - dolls, beasts of burden, and you expect us to bear it forever dumbly; but I won't! I shall cry out till I die. And now, you say it almost out loud, "Go and breed for the empire." War brides! Pah! (18)

18 Undermining the assumption that women are officially obliged to "express their citizenship or even nationalism by proudly sending sons to war" (Lorentzen and Turpin XI), Hedwig links matrimony and motherhood to pacifism, morale, and female equality in the nation-state. She is not interested in any jingoistic patriotism and does not promote values like honor, religious idealism and sacrifice in the context of war and patriarchy either. Rather, for her civilization itself is at stake, because the female womb is no longer a safe haven where an innocent and positive future might prosper. Furthermore, women are still denied unrestricted agency as citizens and don't have a say in communal and national affairs. In an argument with Hertz she puts it as follows:

Hertz: [...] There will always be war. Hedwig: Then one day we will stop giving you men. Look at mother. Four sons torn from her in one month. [...] We don't want armies and fighting, we women. [...] And haven't we anything to say? Hertz: No. War is man's business. Hedwig: Who gives you the men? We women. We bear and rear and agonize. Well, if we are fit for that, we are fit to have a voice in the fate of the men we bear. If we can bring forth the men for the nation, we can sit with you in your councils and shape the nation, and say whether it is to war or peace we give the sons we bear. (23)

19 Contrary to the notion that "[. . .] war cultures must invest in an image of a peace worth fighting for, a peace which is imagined through images of an idealized and nostalgic pre-war Golden Age" (16), put forward by Helen Cooper, Adrienne Auslander Munch and Susan Merrill Squier (1989), Wentworth does not see a pre-war Golden Age but rather envisions a post-war Golden Age where women are powerful agents within the nation. Moreover, she takes up critic April Carter's later thesis that maternal thinking is not merely a basis for feminist pacifism, but enhances women's participation in so-called just wars. As

Carter points out in an essay entitled "Should Women Be Soldiers or Pacifists?": "If war is inevitable [...] or if there are some genuinely just wars, then women's responsibility as citizens may sometimes require them to fight, regardless of whether fighting clashes with women's biological or culturally created 'nature'" (36). In *War Brides* Wentworth traces such a link between women, war and citizenship, in line with April Carter's and Jean Bethke Elshtain's claim that women have to go beyond feminism to make political judgments within fundamental debates about war and peace. Consequently, the patriarchal forces of stability, namely nationalism, devotion to duty, traditional gender roles, patriotic sacrifice, and a cheerful willingness to die for one's country, prevail until the play's final scene in which the protagonist receives the message that her fiancée has been killed at the front. At first sight, Hedwig is completely pain-struck and appears just as another traditional female war victim back home. Nevertheless, soon she escapes the home-front war trauma of loss, mourning and suffering, conservative women like her mother fall victim to. As she states, "I shall never take it like mother - never! [...] Poor mother (and they never asked her if she wanted this war to be)" (25). In fact, the news of Franz' death destroys the last affiliation she had with the patriarchal nation-state and is the ultimate trigger to her subsequent suicide. Through this ultimate act of transgression Hedwig escapes from the patriarchal power she opposes and claims her revolutionary significance. Since society, in the form of the lieutenant, soldiers and the militaristic state, leaves her with no other option, she elects to (most willingly) face death rather than face dismissing her own identity and political ideas (rebellion). Subsequently, her suicide is not a desperate performance of a mad woman but the deliberate action of a silenced political activist and pacifist who uses the last possibility left to her to exercise power and retain a limited freedom to choose her own destiny. This notion is supported by a message she leaves behind for the emperor stating "I refuse to bear my child until you promise there shall be no more war" (25). Although Hedwig is dead she still speaks, firstly, through the written message she leaves behind, secondly, through her suicidal act and its consequences. The double murder she commits in that she kills herself and the baby in her womb, is, to apply modern war terminology, a suicide-attack against patriarchal society. The radical politics and the defiance to liberate herself and also to resist and redefine the state merges in a kinship between life and death. This puts Hedwig in line with Antigone, the traditional feminist icon of defiance. As Judith Butler points out in *Antigone's Claim* (2000):

Prohibited from action, she [Antigone] nevertheless acts, and her act is hardly a simple assimilation to an existing norm. And in acting, as one who has no right to act, she upsets the vocabulary of kinship that is a precondition of the human, implicitly raising the question for us of what those preconditions really must be. [...] She acts, she speaks, she becomes one for whom the speech act is a fatal crime, but this fatality

exceeds her life and enters the discourse of intelligibility as its own promising fatality, the social norm of its aberrant, unprecedented future. (82)

20 In conclusion, one could claim that Wentworth subverts the essentialist notion that "all women who bear children are committing, literally and symbolically, a blood sacrifice for the perpetuation of the species" (168). Modifying the concept of "motherhood as one of the pivotal components of women's war resistance" (Lorentzen and Turpin XII) in the play, she illustrates that it is not motherhood per se which will lead to changes and a pacifist future, but rather its ultimate disruption in a politicized context. In all, *War Brides* suggests a female identity construction in the context of war and nationalism which critic Jean Bethke Elshtain has described as chastened patriotism (see *Women and War*). For Elshtain a chastened patriot is a woman who is committed to the nation; however, she is never a blind follower of state authorities, but rather a critical citizen who is able to detach herself from present confinements and thus able to think about alternatives. Valorizing diversity, multiple identities and progress, a chastened patriot thus changes the traditional concepts of nationalism, and war as Elshtain concludes (see 268-269). This theory suggests a transgression of binary oppositions and enables a re-assessment of the historical role of women beyond traditional gender dichotomies and patriotic warfare in the political and public sphere. Furthermore, it links up with Spike Peterson's notion of gendered nationalism in that it allows a gender-sensitive approach where gender is not the primary or most salient dimension to transform hierarchical relations; however it is recognized as "making a difference, and in the context of nationalism and intergroup conflicts, may be the difference we most need to see and move beyond" (Spike Peterson 47).

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Texans, War Fever, and the Absence of the Female

By Walter W. Hölbling, University of Graz, Austria

Abstract:

Developments since the terrorist attacks of 9-11, including the recent war in Iraq and its aftermath, have reminded us again that the U.S. are a large and very diverse country - in its geographical as well as social, cultural, and political dimensions; and yet the diversity tends to fold into almost unified action and opinion in times of crises. [...] In particular, in times of real or proclaimed national crises, one can observe upsurges of a male warrior attitude in public discourse whose declared goal is to destroy an - at least rhetorically - identified external enemy. [...] Women, though generally the majority of the U. S. population, are virtually absent in this discourse emphasizing the (male) body as weapon and the brotherhood of watchful men on whose technology-supported skills depends the welfare of the nation.

1 Developments since the terrorist attacks of 9-11, including the recent war in Iraq and its aftermath, have reminded us again that the U.S. are a large and very diverse country - in its geographical as well as social, cultural, and political dimensions; and yet the diversity tends to fold into almost unified action and opinion in times of crises. Attempts to give shape to this sometimes puzzling phenomenon have been numerous, from Tocqueville and Crèvecoeur to Thorstein Veblen and Max Weber, and on to Marshall MacLuhan, Umberto Eco, and Baudrillard. In literature, one might begin with Charles Brockden Brown and J. F. Cooper and continue with Hawthorne, Melville, Whitman to Faulkner, Fitzgerald, Mailer, Pynchon, Didion, Morrison, and John DeLillo. In particular, in times of real or proclaimed national crises, one can observe upsurges of a male warrior attitude in public discourse whose declared goal is to destroy an - at least rhetorically - identified external enemy. This discourse resembles the biblical ritual of the scapegoat whose just punishment guarantees the reestablishment of cosmic order:

As a rule, in Judaism, Islam, and Protestantism, responsibility for the world's sin is projected onto minority populations, strangers, and foreigners; those with tongues, customs, and pantheons alien to God's faithful. In collectively objectifying evil and positing it upon this external enemy, a sense of cleanliness of His "remnant" is created symbolically. Analogous to the Levitical rite of the scapegoat (Lev. 16:20-12), the projectors can "escape" from acknowledging the possibility of their own blemish. [...] Thus, mythologically, the holy war will be fought between the absolutely righteous and the equally absolute incarnation of Evil. Insofar as it exorcises the objectified evil, the ferocity of the violence in the war must reflect the enormity of the crime against God and man. [...] The Hebraic, the Muslim and Christian holy wars, both in myth and enactment, are among the most ruthless in human experience. (Aho 151)

Women, though generally the majority of the U. S. population, are virtually absent in this discourse emphasizing the (male) body as weapon and the brotherhood of watchful men on whose technology-supported skills depends the welfare of the nation. In the media society of



our time, symbolic visual actions and image bites go around the globe and achieve considerable signifying power. When Hollywood Star Leonardo Di Caprio outs himself as an environmentalist¹, he makes a clear statement to the world, and only hypercritical readers would argue that the fact that he prefers American hamburgers to organically grown food substantially diminishes his environmental stance. When U. S. President George W. Bush, early on in his "State of the Union" address of January 29, 2002, lists the liberation of Afghanistan women from the oppressive Taliban regime as a major achievement of his administration, he sends a powerful message to the women of the world that suffers little from the fact that two weeks later his Attorney General, John Ashcroft, uses US-\$ 8,000 of American taxpayers' money to drape the scantily clad classicist statues of The Spirit of Justice (female) and The Majesty of Law (male), because they make him "feel uncomfortable" (*Time*, Feb. 11 2002, 5.). In both cases, the "small print," even if it is parallel or close in time with the headline message, goes widely unnoticed by the global public. John Ashcroft's deed, however, not only brought forth a variety of critical responses; it also re-focuses attention on what are often considered particularly ambiguous "American" attitudes toward the human body, ranging from repression to admiration to commodification, especially toward its sensory/sensuous potential.

2 What I would like to do in this essay is read a not so frequently discussed novel of the late 1960s with regard to its possible significance for recent events and discourses, displayed in public statements of G. W. Bush and critical responses to them. The novel is Norman Mailer's *Why Are We in Vietnam?* (1967), the primary public statements are G. W. Bush's "State of the Union" address of January 29, 2002, his national radio address of June 8, and several critical responses to them as well as to other acts of the current administration. What they have in common is that they respond to a situation of national crisis; their positions and their messages, though, could not be further apart. Yet I hope to be able to point out some interesting relations between them in my reading.

3 Mailer's answer to his title question in *Why Are We in Vietnam?* is a kind of fictional psychoanalysis of the collective American unconscious, and he employs striking metaphorical imagery to establish a complex network of popular myths and familiar American concepts of a patriarchal self. The voice of his adolescent protean narrator figure, D. J. ("Dr. Jekyll," "a Harlem spade," "Disc Jockey to America," etc.), sends his pre-recorded audio-tape message on the evening before he leaves for Vietnam. D. J.'s discourse combines Mailer's genital-scatological symbolism of the body including traces of Wilhelm Reich, Herbert Marcuse, and

¹ *Time*, Feb. 28, 2000; *Time* Earth Day 2000 Special Edition, April/May 2000, 80ff.

Norman O. Brown with elements of Marshall McLuhan's media theory and constitutes a kind of "electronic stream-of-consciousness." It uses a stylized hipster idiom of the '60s that dazzles the reader with images of a mindscape unfiltered by a rational and repressive consciousness. Interwoven in this lingo, and frequently disrupted by comments and asides, are D. J.'s memories of a hunting trip of well-to-do Texan corporate executives in Alaska two years before. In addition to D. J. and his buddy Tex Hyde (who is designed as D. J.'s alter ego), the participants are D. J.'s father Rusty Jethroe, a leading executive (= "High Grade Asshole") in the multinational corporation Central Consolidated Combined Chemical and Plastic (= "four C & P"), and two of his subordinates (WWV 34ff). The leader of the hunting party is Big Luke Fellinka, owner of the Moe Henry and Obungekat Safari Group, whose legendary reputation as successful big-game hunter has already been tarnished somewhat by too many years of profitable hunting trips with America's very rich. Under his guidance, the hunt becomes professionally organized slaughter. The use of helicopters and a formidable array of high-tech weaponry guarantees an enormous daily harvest of trophies, the quantifiable yardstick of social success among the members of the group; it also invites comparisons with the equally "performance oriented" parameter of the U.S. troops in Vietnam, the notorious "*body count*."

4 But Mailer goes far beyond suggesting superficial analogies between the hunting trip and Vietnam; he is looking for the roots of this unbridled joy of killing, of the fascination with high-tech overkill in the collective patriarchal American psyche. He articulates his belief that eventually all boils down to the accumulative and mutually reinforcing effects of repressive sexual norms, secularized versions of the Puritan work ethic, business interests and the military-industrial complex, American imperialism backed by an unbroken sense of mission, the belief in "manifest destiny," and a holy fear of everything that does not conform to the WASP way of life - including the notorious suppression and commodification of the body, human or animal. Mailer's discourse is one of continuous deferral of fixed meanings - intertextual references abound, often masked as informal inserts in stream-of-consciousness passages, evoking ephemeral poetical images that are continuously modified and expanded, suggesting new horizons of meaning. The very first paragraph of the novel may serve as a good example:

Hip hole and hupmobile, Braunschweiger, you didn't invite Geiger and his counter for nothing, here is D. J. the friendLee voice at your service - hold tight young America - introductions come. Let go of my dong, Shakespeare, I have gone too long, it is too late to tell my tale, may Batman tell it, let him declare there's blood on my dick and D. J. Dicktor Doc Dick and Jek has got the bloods, and has done animal murder, out out damn fart, and murder of the soldierest sort, cold was my hand and hot. (WWV 7)

The alliterative punning following the "hip" at the beginning of the quote signals language register as well as target audience of the narrator, reinforced by one of several allusions to William Burrough's *Naked Lunch* in "friendLee," and further specified by "young America." The reference to *Naked Lunch* is more than just a nod to the author's literary mentor and also suggests other affinities with Burrough's novel, e.g. D. J.'s "grassed out" state, but most of all the attempt of both authors to cast a critical eye on power games in U. S. society. The rhyming connection between "Braunschweiger" and "Geiger" at first seems a bit forced, at best justified by their common origin in the German language. However, by separating the traditional connection of *Geiger* and *counter*, *counter* - referring back to *Braunschweiger* - also suggests the meaning of the store counter over which both objects - resembling each other in their oblong shape - are being sold. The semantic tension of *sausage* and *radio-active detecting device*, together with *service*, evokes the theme of commodities and consumerism in a technologically highly advanced society. In addition, the function of the Geiger counter introduces modern physics, which plays an important role in this novel: the invisible field of electro-magnetic forces is a central metaphor for Mailer's metaphysics and its images of the analogies of cosmic energy and the human unconscious.

5 With "dong" the second sentence of the quotation adds a sexual dimension to the range of possible meanings of cylindrical objects and thus also lends new connotations to other phrases of the previous sentence, like "hold tight young America" and "introductions come." The juxtaposition of Shakespeare and Batman, of canonized classical author and cartoon hero, together with repeated allusions to the potential phallic element in Melville's *Moby-Dick*, places the events to come in a postmodern frame. "Doc Dick and Jek" remind us of Walt Disney's *Tick, Trick and Track*, encompassing the children's world of popular comics as well as the phantastic male ideal of Batman, while foreshadowing the schizophrenic world of Dr. Jekyll and Mister Hide. The second part of the second sentence specifies the references to Shakespeare with idiosyncratic variations of passages from *Macbeth*, which in themselves evoke the genital-scatological character of Mailer's manichean cosmology as we know it from his writings like "The Metaphysics of the Belly," "The Economy of Time," "The White Negro," and as it is explored almost *ad nauseam* in his later novel, *Ancient Evenings*.

6 The contamination, as one might call it, of "out, damn'd spot" (*Macbeth* 5.01.35) and "out, out, brief candle" (*Macbeth* 5.05.23) into "out out damn fart," relates the murder of the king in Shakespeare's play, an expression of a ruthless competition for power, to the excremental realm of Mailer's private symbolism. Derived from Norman O. Brown's psychoanalytical version of Max Weber's theory of protestant ethics, this power struggle is for

Mailer the expression of a perverted Eros whose creative potential turns to (body) "waste" because it is obsessed with the domination of others as the only available means of self-affirmation. "Animal murder" emphasizes the fact that murder belongs to the irrational side of humans, while also pointing to the concrete plot of the novel, the slaughtering of Alaska's animal world, and especially of its "king," the Grizzly Bear. "Murder of the soldierest sort" establishes the link between Macbeth's deed - as one of the king's soldiers and loyals - and the title of the novel, and thus completes the analogy between the high-tech bear hunt in the wilderness of the US North and the US engagement in Vietnam.

7 The final phrase of this passage, "cold was my hand and hot," re-connects with the initial connotations of hipsters and drugs: whereas cold means "bad, unfeeling, insensitive," *hot* has the special connotation of "sexually aroused," once more locating the roots of murderous aggression in a perversion of our erotic/sexual drives. Additional connotations of *cold* and *hot*, which in the drug scene suggest the depressive effects of heroin and the arousing effects of cocaine, respectively, place the murderer's state into yet another context; at the same time, they also foreshadow the theme of the following paragraph, which discusses Marshall McLuhan's differentiation of "hot" and "cool" media (cf. McLuhan esp. 22-32).

8 Alliteration and internal rhyme, atypical syntax and transformative word play surround the readers in a cloud of sounds that not incidentally evokes McLuhan's commentaries on acoustic perception: "The ear favors no particular 'point of view'. We are *enveloped* by sound. [...] We hear sounds from everywhere, without ever having to focus" (McLuhan/Fiori 111). Here, the rhetorical/acoustic redundancy corresponds to the semantic one - a case of Roland Barthes' "plurality of stereophonic voices," (Barthes 159f) or maybe Mikhail Bakhtin's "polyphony" and "heteroglossia" (Bakhtin 368-69): connecting common knowledge, transmogrified Shakespeare quotes and popular myths, already the first ten lines of Mailer's novel establish the kind of kaleidoscopic indeterminacy that characterizes the whole text, a discourse which constantly changes the frequency of its quasi-electronic stream-of-consciousness and thus, ultimately, creates strings of meanings that compete with each other for validity.

9 While McLuhan sees electronic media as "extensions of our senses," for Mailer they are even more powerful instruments to further *reduce* what little space is left for the irrational, creative and vital part of ourselves: by quantifying them as units of electrical energy, they operationalize basic human moods, emotions, desires, and feelings caused by sensory perceptions, thus making them accessible for - and subject to - scientific models of thought. The body and all its primary functions have become objects of high-tech manipulation. At the

end of the novel, it is because of their understanding of man and world in terms of bio-electric currents and electro-magnetic fields that the two adolescents, D. J. and Tex, fail in their attempt to achieve a state of harmony with nature, even though they sneak away from the adults and walk into the Alaskan wilderness unarmed. Their initiation under the cold light of the *aurora borealis* comes in the telepathic message of an archetypal animal godhead who shows no human qualities:

[...] yea God was here, and He was real and no man was He, but a beast, some beast of giant jaws and cavernous mouth with a full cave's breath and fangs [...] and God said "Go out and kill - fulfill my will, go and kill," and they hung there each of them on the knife of the divide in all conflict of lust to own the other yet in fear of being killed by the other and as [...] the lights shifted, something in the radiance of the North went into them [...] and they were twins, never to be near as lovers again, but killer brothers, owned by something, prince of darkness, lord of light, they did not know. (WWV 202-204)

In view of Mailer's sometimes rather misogynist life and work, it may come as a bit of a surprise to recognize that what is missing in this archetypal and homoerotically charged initiation scene is the *female principle*; different from most hunter myths (cf. J. Campbell, R. Slotkin, Daniel-Boone myth, etc.), all representatives of nature in Mailer's Alaskan world are male. The animal godhead revealing himself can be seen as allegorical apotheosis of our death wish - Freud's Thanatos - whose alluring "come to me" (WWV 202) the two adolescents can barely resist: "They could almost have got up and walked across the pond and into the north without their boots, going up to disappear and die and join that great beast" (WWV 202). Here, a mystic union with the "spirit of nature" would not be a fertile act of the male and female principle, but simply mean death. This abortive relation between God and man parallels the one between male and male for the two boys during their phase of erotic desire for each other as quoted above. The absence of a complementary female principle would make a possible sexual act between them not a creative union but merely a competition between two representatives of the same principle, the weaker yielding to the stronger, suggesting a sterile form of power struggle leading to violence and death. For the two boys, the solution in this moment is "male bonding" - they become "killer brothers," turning their joint destructive potential outward, as a life-denying substitute for the creative sexual union they cannot achieve. Two years after this experience, the two "killer brothers" (WWV 204) go to Vietnam.

10 As Mailer sees it, the tension between our loss of faith in the irrational, on the one hand, and the growing scientific symbol systems for understanding ourselves and the world, on the other, have produced "a fiercely controlled schizophrenia" (Mailer, *Armies* 212), which

for him is the primary cause for aggressive behavior on an individual as well as national scale. The ultimate cause for this aggressiveness is a state of fundamental insecurity, an existential angst á la Kierkegaard, closely related to the repression of the irrational side - the body - in human nature. It manifests itself in the continuous need to take possession of the Other, as an obsessive pattern of self-(re)assurance that never brings more than temporary satisfaction - in Sigmund Freud's terms, a classical pattern of neurosis.

11 Mailer's most scathing and irreverent indictment of this attitude appears in the middle of the novel when Rusty, having failed to prove himself as the top big-game hunter in front of his subalterns, ruminates in distress about the possible consequences of this embarrassing situation:

Yeah, sighs Rusty, the twentieth century is breaking up the ball game, and Rusty thinks large common thoughts such as these: 1 - The women are free. They fuck too many to believe one can do the job. 2 - The Niggers are free, and the dues they got to be paid are no Texan virgin's delight. 3 - The Niggers and women are fucking each other. 4 - The yellow races are breaking loose. 5 - Africa is breaking loose. 6 - The adolescents are breaking loose including his own son. 7 - The European nations hate America's guts. 8 - The products are no fucking good any more. 9 - Communism is a system guaranteed to collect dues from all losers. 9a - More losers than winners. 9b - and out: Communism is going to defeat capitalism unless promptly destroyed. [...] 11 - The white men are no longer champions in boxing. 12 - The great white athlete is being superseded by the great black athlete. 13 - The Jews run the Eastern wing of the Democratic party. 14 -Karate, a Jap sport, is now prerequisite to good street fighting. 15 - The sons of the working class are running around America on motorcycles. 16 - Church is out, LSD is in. 17 - He, Rusty, is fucked unless he gets that bear, for if he don't, white men are fucked more and they can take no more. Rusty's secret is that he sees himself as one of the pillars of the firmament, yeah, man - he reads the world's doom in his own fuckup. If he is less great than God intended him to be, then America is in Trouble. They don't breed Texans for nothing. (WWV 110-111)

Adding contemporary problems to familiar nightmares of the Southern white male, the laconic presentation of well-worn clichés in the pseudo-rational argument lends satirical force to this passage. Rusty's gloomy view of himself, triggered by his personal failure, is something we may be able to sympathize with; but its global projection shows signs of an ethnocentric self-righteousness, reminiscent of the one entertained by the New England Puritans (and many other European missionaries at the time) when they saw themselves as the chosen people in the wilderness. Here is a passage from Increase Mather's introduction to the Indian wars of 1675:

That the Heathen People amongst whom we live, and whose land the Lord God of our Fathers hath given to us for a rightful Possession have [...] been planning mischievous devices against that part of the English Israel which is seated in these goings down of the sun, no Man that is an Inhabitant of any considerable standing, can be ignorant. (Mather 1, in Slotkin 83)

While Mather's self-image may be validated by religious beliefs and the historical situation, Rusty's Jeremiad comes across as compensating aggressiveness of a power elite that tries to hide the lack of an ethical and ideal core of their claim for supremacy behind meaningless macho rituals. Fears of liberated female sexuality here suggestively link up with racism, and loss of manhood and sexual prowess equals loss of social and political power and control, on the individual as well as national level. Rusty's catalogue of imagined woes and dangers also makes it very clear that in Mailer's world of Texas corporate executives, eroticism is little more than a difficult word in a spelling bee or the suggestive wording on a sophisticated night bar ad. As the name of the only female figure in the novel, Rusty's wife "Hallelloo Death-row Jethroe," suggests, and her comments on choice details from the intimate life of the Dallas upper crust reveal, eroticism is virtually absent from this world (cf. 19ff.). Eros, for over 2,500 years a term invoking a mysterious, irrational, seductive, untamed and inexplicable life force, has been replaced by rational technology and social engineering in a society that leaves little space for the irrational in everyday life. Yet the irrational can never be truly replaced, though it may be displaced or repressed.

12 For Mailer, this is the almost pathological force behind the destruction of Alaska's wildlife as well as the US involvement in Vietnam; it is the force that reduces the eros of sexuality to an act of mere physical possessing and thus to a competitive power-game, and it explains the desire for an ever-growing control of social life by means of state-of-the-art electronic surveillance technology.² In opposition to McLuhan, electronics for Mailer do not offer us the chance to regain the lost sense of trust and security between the I and the world in the information community of a global village.

13 Today, some of Mailer's radical critique appears exaggerated, some dated. Other aspects, however, still seem to be quite relevant. What Mailer suggests is that the war in Vietnam was, if not a logical, so at least a psycho-logical consequence of certain "civilian" attitudes and patterns in the U. S. which encourage the belief in a Manichean cosmology and envision the ideal American as God's soldier in the fight against evil. Needless to say, the body of this soldier is an instrument of power and death rather than a source of pleasure and fertility, as the "killer brothers" D. J. & Tex exemplify.

14 On this level, Mailer's critique of 1967 appears to be of almost uncanny topicality. One should recall that on March 8, 1983, speaking before church leaders in Florida, then US President Ronald Reagan called the Soviet Union the seat of "evil in the world." With USSR

² Cf. also Mailer's arguments in *Cannibals and Christians*, pp. 1-4, and in *The Armies of the Night*, esp. pp. 172-175.

President Gorbatchev and the collapse of the Soviet Empire in 1989, the demonizing Cold War rhetoric temporarily disappeared from US public statements. Yet it was speedily revived in the wake of the terrorist attacks of 9-11-2001. For his 2002 "State of the Union Address" on January 23, President George W. Bush's speech writers coined the term "axis of evil;" apart from the fact that the two terms are also "four-letter words," they are a clever choice of phrase that evokes the Axis powers of World War II as well as the Cold War, and also suggests an American moral superiority of the fundamentalist kind. This rhetoric places the USA once again on the side of God in a primeval show-down against the forces of darkness in which American soldiers' bodies - and their electronic and high-tech armored extensions - are the primary weapons.

15 However, fairly obvious similarities may be misleading and can distract us from looking beyond them at more interesting aspects. Public statements like the "State of the Union" addresses have over the years developed their specific rhetorical conventions, and certain formulas have become an absolute necessity (see Goetsch/Hurm). Especially in times of crisis or war, a depiction of "us" versus "them" in black and white has become part of the standard repertoire, as have oppositions like rational/irrational, good/evil, just/unjust, freedom/oppression, peaceful/aggressive, brave/cowardly, etc., together with the emphasis on the role of the USA as victim of aggression and/or defender of a threatened peace (Goetsch/Hurm 73 ff.). Likewise, and quite independent of the actual state of affairs, speakers traditionally confirm American strength and determination ("Yet the state of our Union has never been stronger!"), point to the uniqueness of this particular historical moment, and express their conviction that the nation will emerge victorious.

16 In President George W. Bush's address, the combination of "war against terrorism" and "homeland security," with the envisioned beneficiary effects of "safer neighborhoods" resulting from "the sacrifice of soldiers, the fierce brotherhood of firefighters [...], stronger police [...] stricter border enforcement [...]" and America's dependence on "the eyes and ears of alert citizens" convey connotations which, I must confess, for my ears have an ominous ring to them. To all of this, in his radio speech on June 8, 2002, Bush adds the prospect of a centralized information gathering institution, since realized in the shape of the Department of Homeland Security.

17 Let us situate this rhetoric in the context of recent major business malpractice (like the Enron, Worldcom, Xerox, Andersen Consulting, AOL, 3M, etc. scandals); the neglect of environmental concerns (the unsigned Kyoto agreement, oil projects in Alaska natural reserves, cutting of funds for cleaning up toxic waste sites), blatant violations of civil liberties

in connections with people detained for months without legal assistance following 9-11, plans to expand the rights of FBI and other intelligence agencies, the decision to dramatically upgrade military weapon systems, and Mr. Bush's recent considerations to end the congressional ban on "small" nuclear arms. What emerges looks like the profile of a society threatened domestically by ruthless business interests and besieged by an overpowering external enemy, determined to protect itself with the help of superior military technology and all-out information surveillance, electronic as well as personal, appealing to values like "service," "sacrifice," and "fierce brotherhood" - Rusty Jethroe's Jeremiad, the high-tech weaponry of the Alaska hunters, as well as the lethal "brotherhood" of D. J. and Tex come readily to mind.

18 To make it clear - I am not commenting here on the pragmatic effectiveness of whatever policies are adopted by the current U. S. administration, nor do I intend to draw superficial analogies. What strikes me as worth contemplating are the structural and thematic affinities to Norman Mailer's critical fictional analysis of U. S. society in 1967, then in another state of crisis. They seem to imply - and some people might find THIS a bit alarming - that conceptual changes in the mind of American male leadership over the past 35 years have not been very significant. Noam Chomsky, famous linguist turned activist, and an acknowledged representative of liberal intellectuals, in a recent interview does not mince his words: "Sept. 11 was just a gift to them and to other harsh and repressive elements throughout the world" (Holt).

19 Moreover, the absence of a female principle, in Mailer's novel one of the main causes for individual as well as institutional violence, seems to continue. The U. S. Attorney General's censure of even allegorical nude bodies, as mentioned in the beginning, comes across as a rather infelicitous act of symbolic repression directed against the return of the repressed. If or how Norman Mailer commented on this is not known. It is refreshing to see, though, that the Attorney General's action has spawned some quite outspoken criticism, among it also an eruption of the feminine into the male world of Texan militancy, from the American artists' grassroots.³ It is the text of an open letter to John Ashcroft that in the summer of 2002 is being circulated throughout the internet. Its author is described as "a woman of 60+ years, conservatively dressed, and obviously quite talented" (Braz-Valentine). Her name is Claire Braz-Valentine; she read her text (which has since been set as a poem) in

³ Other responses are also quite clear, like that of the singer and film star Cher: "What are we going to do next? Put shorts on the statue of David, put an 1880s bathing suit on Venus, rising a shirt on the Venus de Milo?" in *The Washington Post*, Monday March 4, 2002; or Mark Morford, well-known columnist of *The San Francisco Chronicle*, January 30, 2002, in his rather outspoken essay "John Ashcroft's Perilous Nipples - In Which the Desperately Dour Attorney General Covers up Justice and Law, Appropriately."

public at the annual *In Celebration of the Muse* festival at Cabrillo College, California, on March 14, 2002, and I quote the following passages:

John, John, John, you've got your priorities all wrong. [...] So, in your office every morning in your secret prayer meeting, while an American woman is sexually assaulted every 6 seconds, while anthrax floats around the post office and settles in the chests of our citizens... you've got another chest on your mind. [...] And when we women see our grandmothers, our mothers, our daughters, our grand-daughters, our sisters, ourselves [...] when we women see that statue, the Spirit of Justice, we see the spirit of strength and the spirit of survival. While you look at that breast, John, that jug on the Spirit of Justice, and deal with your problems of lust and sex and nakedness, we see it as a testimony to motherhood. [...] and you see it as a tit. It's not the money it cost. It's the message you send: We've got the right to live in freedom. We've got the right to cheat Americans out of millions of dollars and then just not want to tell congress about it. So, now John, you can be photographed while you stand there and talk about guns and bombs and poisons without the breast appearing over your right shoulder, without that bodacious bosom bothering you, and we just wanted to tell you in the spirit of justice, in the spirit of truth: [...] John, there is still one very big boob left standing there in that picture!

I find this spirited statement a wonderfully appropriate female complementary to Mailer's rough discourse; it recovers the "whuman" quality of the body and its erotic potential, evoking the whole range of sensuality, emotion, beauty, and idealism that Eros has symbolized over millenia, while its "motherly" discourse relegates John Ashcroft's misconceptions about the beauty and significance of nude bodies to the realm of a little boy's very displaced ideas of eroticism and the importance of the female. *Pars pro toto*, this critique includes the administration which installed Ashcroft in his current office.

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"On the Knife-edge of Time": Katherine Burdekin and Naomi Mitchison

By Sylvia Vance, Oxford University, England

Abstract:

Demonstrating direct links between different works is not the intention here, although some clearly do exist and are able to be explored. The objective is to understand the political context of the writing of the time, not from a perspective that examines women writers from a rubric of male-created and dominated modernism but from the perspective of the women writers themselves and their own understanding of the relationship between gender and war. However ground-breaking the three-volume work of Gilbert and Gubar may have been, however seemingly encompassing the two volumes of Bonnie Kime Scott's *Refiguring Modernism*, the projects depend a great deal on the vision that male writers have of women and women writers. With a new language provided by the war, men saw women as the enemy, but their misogyny was grounded in an historical antipathy that many women writers of the period comprehended to various degrees of sophistication and demonstrated through various kinds of work, particularly prose and particularly polemical prose.

Let us try to drag up into consciousness the subconscious Hitlerism that holds us down. It is the desire for aggression; the desire to dominate and enslave. Even in the darkness we can see that made visible. We can see shop windows blazing; and women gazing; painted women; dressed-up women; women with crimson lips and crimson fingernails. They are slaves who are trying to enslave. If we could free ourselves from slavery we should free men from tyranny. Hitlers are bred by slaves.

Virginia Woolf, "Thoughts on Peace in an Air Raid"

1 Paul Fussell's landmark work, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, unintentionally establishes a kind of pre-Hegelian mind set that he claims dominates thought after the First World War. Beginning by naming one manifestation of that mind set, "The *Versus* Habit," Fussell expands the notion:

The physical confrontation between "us" and "them" is an obvious figure of gross dichotomy. But less predictably the mode of gross dichotomy came to dominate perception and expression elsewhere, encouraging finally what we can call the modern versus habit: one thing opposed to another, not with some Hegelian hope of synthesis involving a dissolution of both extremes (that would suggest "a negotiated peace," which is anathema), but with a sense that one of the poles embodies so wicked a deficiency or flaw or perversion that its total submission is called for. [. . .] But with the landscape, the former domain of "beauty", ravaged and torn, and with "fear" no longer the thrill of the old Sublime but a persistent physical terror, the time-honored nineteenth-century synthesis is no longer thinkable. (79)

Under the sub-heading "The Persistent Enemy," Fussell establishes a binary paradigm as the font of modernism and suggests that in "some special ways the modern world chooses to put things do appear profoundly affected by the sense of adversary proceedings to which the war accustomed both those who had fought and those who had not" (105). He traces "frantically

clever displacement[s] of the idea of war," in universities like the one attended by Christopher Isherwood (106). What he says of Pound's "truffle-snuffing for enemies" is then expanded to include the likes of T.S. Eliot, Wyndham Lewis and D.H. Lawrence, so that "The Great War Staff and 'home-front' merge to assume the shape of the common enemy, persisting as club-man, don, divine, editor, industrialist, and politician" (112). In this section of the book, Fussell frames modernism as founded on the essence of adversarial relationships and he ends the section with a quotation from Jung's interpretation of a dream: "The happenings in the dream suggested that the war, which in the outer world had taken place some years before, was not yet over, but was continuing to be fought within the psyche" (113).

2 What Fussell neglects to mention is how the common enemy, possibly the predominant enemy in the male-created post-war psyche who had become the focus image of the Home Front, was woman. Certainly, the modernisms of Pound, Lewis, Eliot and Lawrence are full of misogynies now more clearly understood for what they are: a pervasively common position against women that is the founding mythology of modernism so clearly enunciated by Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar.¹

3 The decade following the war was viewed by many as a time of possibility, certainly a time when one was forced to register change, whether to the good or ill. In contrast, through the 1930s, with the backlash against the advances women had made, the economic uncertainties and, finally, the threat of Fascism, the experiences of the First World War were revisited and rewritten. Many women writers integrated that experience into texts in a way they had not in the 1920s.² Vera Brittain's *Testament of Youth* is an obvious instance of that impulse.

4 The work of the 1930s that explores the issues of Fascism and pacifism, gender and war, far exceeding others in the complexity of its thought and perspicacity, is Virginia Woolf's *Three Guineas*. It is a difficult text, one which, as Roger Poole suggests in his "Preface" to *The Unknown Virginia Woolf*, needs to be explored more fully. "[I]ncreased attention to the textual nature of Woolf's thinking" he comments,

is accompanied by an awareness that the ideas she was proposing at the end of her life, those in *Three Guineas* and in *Between the Acts* particularly, were so irreceivable that they are recorded only in a half-occluded form. It will take some time and ingenuity to find adequate ways of recuperating this later work, in which she emerges as a political thinker and one, moreover, who analyses the causes of militarism and war in the detours of the male psyche. As we move into a world of ever more bitter and more localised and more closely defined nationalism, Woolf's account of the origins of war

¹ See Lesley Higgins's *The Modernist Cult of Ugliness: Aesthetic and Gender Politics* for the most trenchant and informative work on the dependence on gender and misogyny in the construction of modernism.

² The backlash is articulated most thoroughly in Naomi Mitchison's *Home* and Winifred Holtby's *Women*.

needs to be unravelled and faced. (xxvii-xxviii)

The Years needs to be added to the later works Poole discusses, but at the same time the subversive nature of *Three Guineas* cannot be over-estimated.

5 At the same time, contemporary readings of *Three Guineas* could be enriched if the work of other women of the period who contributed to Woolf's thought are examined and credited. Demonstrating direct links between different works is not the intention here, although some clearly do exist and are able to be explored. The objective is to understand the political context of the writing of the time, not from a perspective that examines women writers from a rubric of male-created and dominated modernism but from the perspective of the women writers themselves and their own understanding of the relationship between gender and war. However ground-breaking the three-volume work of Gilbert and Gubar may have been, however seemingly encompassing the two volumes of Bonnie Kime Scott's *Refiguring Modernism*, the projects depend a great deal on the vision that male writers have of women and women writers. With a new language provided by the war, men saw women as the enemy, but their misogyny was grounded in an historical antipathy that many women writers of the period comprehended to various degrees of sophistication and demonstrated through various kinds of work, particularly prose and particularly polemical prose. Women were not necessarily engaged in the men's battle, however, and although they may have addressed themselves to the battle in which they saw the men engaged, it was with an eye on the larger issues that were articulated by the battle. As a result, in retrospect the men seem to have embarked on a battle with phantoms, following the metaphor of Jung's dream. With the rise of Fascism, the women attempted to encompass larger issues than the so-called sex war.

6 In other words, Gilbert and Gubar's umbrella title of the three-volume *No Man's Land: The Place of the Woman Writer in the Twentieth Century* is more accurate than they intend. The premise of their text is well-presented in the subtitle of the first volume, *The War of the Words*, for by the 1930s that war, if it had existed at all, was over for the women writers of the time, even those with little or no political consciousness. It is possible that the retreat into male pseudonyms³, the desire for an answer in pacifism to the threat of the oncoming war, the increase in polemical/political writing--all speak the language of defeat in the face of the unconquerable: Fascism. During the 1930s, then, women writers disinherited from a future they had barely glimpsed in the 1920s were taking the position of the outsider that Woolf calls

³ Storm Jameson, for example, published three novels under two different male pseudonyms in the 1930s. Although she frequently wrote in quite different styles, in no other decade did she publish under a male pseudonym. She continued to published a variety of books until into the 1970s under her own name.

for as the only political position available to women by the time she published *Three Guineas* in 1938.

7 Katherine Burdekin, who wrote under a male pseudonym during the 1930s after having published six books under her own name in the 1920s, is one of the women who have been retrieved from the dust-heap of women writers forgotten and lost from history. Daphne Patai, who wrote the Introduction to the Lawrence and Wishart 1985 re-issue of *Swastika Night*, has brought Burdekin to light through her work on George Orwell (see Patai's *The Orwell Mystique: A Study of Male Ideology*).⁴ Patai makes a convincing case for Orwell having read *Swastika Night* and for Orwell, "an inveterate borrower," having used much of the dystopia constructed in that novel for his *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, published twelve years later. Both, Patai says, "depict totalitarian régimes in which individual thought has been all but eliminated and towards this end all information about the past, and even memory itself, have been destroyed"; both have a "rebellious protagonist who is approached by a man in a position of power [. . .] who becomes the mediator through whom the protagonist's tendency to rebel is initially channeled, and in each case he gives the protagonist a secret book and hence knowledge"; in both "the secret opposition is called a Brotherhood," and in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* "Orwell gave names to phenomena that also appear in *Swastika Night*" (xii-xiii). Here, however, the comparison ends, and as Patai has pointed out in "Orwell's Despair, Burdekin's Hope: Gender and Power in Dystopia," "*Swastika Night*, like Burdekin's other work, is a strongly feminist text, while *1984* [sic], like Orwell's other work, is androcentric and misogynistic" (Patai, "Orwell's Despair, Burdekin's Hope" 85). As Patai demonstrates quite convincingly, Orwell's novel is far more simplistic and, in the end, less realistic in its dystopic portrait. Orwell, Patai argues,

does not provide a name for the key factor that explains the Party's preoccupation with domination, power, and violence: these are elements in the gender ideology that Burdekin labels the "cult of masculinity". By her ability to name this phenomenon and analyse its workings in the world, Burdekin gives her depiction of a totalitarian régime a critical dimension totally lacking in Orwell's novel. (Patai, "Introduction", *Swastika Night* xiii)

That critical dimension, again, is found in Burdekin's chilling portrait of the success of Nazism, seven hundred years after it has conquered Europe and half the world while the Japanese hold power in the other half.⁵

⁴ See also a letter from Gilbert Bonifas who quotes a letter to himself from Geoffrey Gorer, a friend of Orwell's, who says, "I can think you can assume that I did give/lend him a copy [of *Swastika Night*]" (*Notes and Queries*, March 1987, 59).

⁵ Elizabeth Russell says that in *Swastika Night*, "the Nazis are competing with the Japanese for world power" (21). However, what is more significant is not that they are competing but that they are on a constant state of war

8 Whatever *Swastika Night* has in common with *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the differences are more compelling. The novel begins with a service in the Holy Hitler chapel, an ordinary monthly worship:

*I believe, sang all the men and boys and the Knight in unison, in God the thunderer, who made this physical earth on which men march in their mortal bodies, and in His Heaven where all heroes are, and in His Son our Holy Adolf Hitler, the Only Man. Who was, not begotten, not born of a woman, but Exploded! (A terrific crash from the organ and the drums, and all right hands raised in the Salute acknowledged that tremendous miracle.) From the Head of His Father, he the perfect, the untainted Man-Child, whom we, mortals and defiled in our birth and in our conception, must ever worship and praise. Heil Hitler. Who in our need, in Germany's need, in the world's need; for our sake, for Germany's sake, for the world's sake; came down from the Mountain, the Holy Mountain, the German Mountain, the nameless one, darkness then, in sin and chaos and impurity, ringed round by devils, by Lenin, by Stalin, by Roehm, by Karl Barth, the four arch-fiends, whose necks He set under His Holy Heel, grinding them into the dust. (With a savagery so familiar that it could hardly be called savagery all the male voices growled out the old words.) Who, when our Salvation was accomplished, went into the Forest, the Holy Forest, the German Forest, the nameless one; and was there reunited to His Father, God the Thunderer, so that we men, the mortals, the defiled at birth, could see His Face no more. (The music was minor, the voices piano and harmonised, with a sweet and telling effect after the long unison.) And I believe that when all things are accomplished and the last heathen man is enlisted in His Holy Army, that Adolf Hitler our God will come again in martial glory to the sound of guns and aeroplanes, to the sound of the trumpets and drums. And I believe in the Two Arch-Heroes, Goering and Goebbels, who were found worthy even to be His Familiar Friends. And I believe in pride, in courage, in violence, in brutality, in bloodshed, in ruthlessness, and all other soldierly and heroic virtues. Heil Hitler. (Burdekin, *Swastika Night* 5-6)*

This perversion of the Apostles' Creed begins the novel with startling brutality, presenting a worship of Hitler by referring parodically to a Christian affirmation of faith. The expansion of the formalities of Christianity continues with the Knight who is leading the service sustaining the rote language ritual, "reading in his pleasant Knightly German the fundamental immutable laws of Hitler Society" (7). Much of what the Knight is professing is a reminder of the hierarchical nature of the society in which they live:

*As woman is above a worm,
So is a man above a woman.
As a woman is above a worm,
So is a worm above a Christian.*

readiness and, in a sense, complicit in sustaining mirroring structures of power. What supports the cult of masculinity is war readiness, a consciousness of a state of war, rather than actual war, which Burdekin presents as "the hope of war" (*Swastika Night* 76). Fussell points us to Anthony Burgess's 1962 dystopia, *The Wanting Seed*, where there is a constant state of war as a mechanism to control the people by having them in a continuous state of war excitement and to eliminate excess population and "such anti-social elements as female 'cretinous over-producers' and male 'corner boys and [. . .] criminals'" (222). The main character escapes the slaughter, but only after having realised that the enemy is not the "Orientals" they were told they were going to fight, but women. Fussell makes no comment.

and

*As a man is above a woman,
So is a Nazi above any foreign Hitlerian.
As a Nazi is above a foreign Hitlerian,
So is a Knight above a Nazi.
As a Knight is above a Nazi,
So is Der Fuehrer (whom may Hitler bless),
Above all Knights,
Even above the Inner Ring of Ten.
And as Der Fuehrer is above all Knights,
So is God, out Lord Hitler, above Der Fuehrer.
But of God the Thunderer and our Lord Hitler
Neither is pre-eminent,
Neither commands,
Neither obeys.
They are equal in this holy mystery.
They are God.
Heil Hitler. (7-8)*

There is no exchange between the Knight who leads the service and the congregation and at the end "The men and boys moved in an orderly drilled way out of the church" (8) in order to make way for the women and girls, who only attend services once every three months, when they were herded like cattle into the church, tiny girl-children, pregnant women, old crones, every female thing that could walk and stand, [. . .]. The women were not allowed to go further into the church than the Goering and Goebbels arms; they had to stay jammed up in half the body of the Swastika [the shape in which the church is built], and they were not allowed to sit down. (8)

While the women stand, so as not to defile the seats the men use, the Knight exhorted them on humility, blind obedience and submission to men, reminding them of the Lord Hitler's supreme condescension in allowing them still to bear men's sons and have that amount of contact with the Holy Mystery of Maleness; while he threatened them with the most appalling penalties should they have any commerce with the male Untouchables, the Christian men, and with milder punishment should they, by word or weeping, or in any other way oppose that custom, that law so essential to Hitler Society, the Removal of the Man-child-- (8-9)

The service functions as an exhortation to produce more male children and to remind the women of the laws of their society. For the women, however, it turns into a ritual of grieving for their lost sons:

Perhaps one had just had her little boy taken away from her at the age of eighteen months, fetched by the Father in the usual ceremonious way ("Woman, where is my son?" "Here, Lord, here is your son, I, all unworthy, have borne----"), and where was he now? his baby limbs in the hard hands of men, skilled men, trained men, to wash

him and feed him and tend him, and bring him up to manhood. Of course women were not fit to rear men-children, of course it was unseemly for a man to be able to point to a woman and say "There is my mother"--of course they must be taken away from us, and never see us and forget us wholly. It's all as it should be, it is our Lord's will, it is men's will, it is our will. But though a woman might go through the whole ceremony of Removal dry-eyed and not make a moan, and even utter the formal responses in a steady voice, and though she might refrain from weeping afterwards, yet, when she got into the church at the next Women's Worship, she would be certain to break down. All together, women fell into a sort of mass grief. One worked on another, and a woman who had not suffered from a Removal for several years would remember the old pain and start a loud mourning like a recently bereaved animal. The more the Knight told them not to, the harder would they weep. Even the bellowers and stormers among the Knights could not stop women crying at their worship. Nothing could stop them, short of killing them all. (9-10)

9 The grief of the women is contrasted with the Knight's speculations that throw into relief the secret worry of present-day Nazism--the women are producing too few female children: "It seemed as if, after hundreds of year of the really whole-hearted subjection natural under a religion which was entirely male, the worship of a man who had not mother, the Only Man, the women had finally lost heart" (11). While the Knight contemplates the future of Nazism, he considers, "They've destroyed us by doing what we told them, and now unless the Thunderer can throw the whole mass of Germans out of his head we're coming to an inglorious end" (12). During the service, then, the Knight inadvertently exhorts the women to bear more strong daughters rather than more strong sons. Having realised this exhortation to be "a crashing mistake" (13) he quickly hypnotizes the women into believing that they misunderstood his words:

If they once knew that the *Knights*, and even der Fuehrer, wanted girl-children to be born in large quantities; that every fresh statistical paper with its terribly disproportionate male births caused groanings and anxieties and endless secret conferences--if the women once realised all this, what would stop them developing a small thin thread of self-respect? If a woman could rejoice publicly in the birth of a girl, Hitlerdom would start to crumble. (14)

10 The previous paragraphs describe the events of Chapter 1, the premises upon which the presented society rests. The plot is simpler. Hermann, who has attended the service conducted by the Knight, meets his English friend Alfred, sent from England to Germany on a pilgrimage. The two had met when Hermann was part of the German army of occupation in England and Alfred was working as an airplane mechanic. They become friends in spite of their differences: "Alfred was urban, quick-witted, a machine-man skilled and rejoicing in his skill; Hermann was slow-brained and bucolic, half-skilled, strong and rejoicing in his strength" (18). They go for a walk in the woods and after a brief conversation, Alfred reveals

that he has a dream of an independent England and the destruction of Nazism; Hermann is thrown into a wrenching conflict between his friendship and love for Alfred and duty to his country.

11 During the service, Hermann had been terribly attracted to a beautiful young boy who was a visiting singer. While in the woods Hermann hears screams and rushes to the rescue, only to find the boy attempting to rape a Christian girl. Christians are considered lower than worms and live outside of the societal structure, so that intercourse with a Christian woman, therefore, as lowest of the low, is regarded as serious offence. Further, intercourse with a woman under sixteen was also a serious offence, "far less for the sake of the little girls than for the sake of the race. Very young girls if just adolescent might bear puny babies as the result of rape. Over sixteen, women's bodies were well-grown and womanly, that danger was past, and as rape implies will and choice and a spirit of rejection on the part of women, there could be no such crime" (13). When Hermann reaches the pair, his "whole body filled with delicious thundering warming floods of rage. He loathed the boy for being even interested in girls [. . .] --Hermann was physically jealous" (33). He beats the boy to a pulp, only stopping short of killing him as Alfred intervenes.

12 When they take the boy back to the village, Hermann must testify before the Knight about the beating, whereupon the Knight meets Alfred. The incident of the beating frames the rest of the action, as the Knight passes on to Alfred and Hermann, who is present at Alfred's insistence, his secret--a history of the European world written by a forefather that contradicts the present history and, more impressionably, a photograph of Hitler showing him to be quite insignificant compared with the huge blond god now worshipped. Moreover, the photograph shows Hitler with someone who to Hermann and Alfred looks like an enticingly beautiful boy but who, however, is revealed to be a girl. After Hermann and Alfred recover from the shock of Hitler possibly having been contaminated by the presence of a girl, Herman, Alfred and the Knight speculate on how and why women have become the imprisoned creatures that the men now know. "They acquiesced in the Reduction of Women," states the Knight.

Women will always be exactly what men want them to be. They have no will, no character, and no souls; they are only a reflection of men. So nothing that they are or can become is ever their fault or their virtue. If men want them to be beautiful they will be beautiful. If men want them to appear to have wills and characters they will develop something that looks like a will and a character though it is really only a sham. If men want them to have an appearance of perfect freedom, even an appearance of masculine power, they will develop a simulacrum of those things. But what men cannot do, never have been able to do, is to stop this blind submission and cause the women to ignore them and disobey them. It's the tragedy of the human race. (70)

Hermann asks that no more be disclosed to him while Alfred takes on the request of the Knight, who has no sons, to be the keeper of the book of history and the photograph. They return to England, the book is hidden and Alfred begins introducing the text to his eldest son. Eventually they are betrayed, however, and Hermann and Alfred are killed. The book is secreted by Alfred's son in the house of a Christian, the one place (other than a Knight's residence) that will not be searched.

13 Throughout the plot the representation of women sustains the dystopian cultural configuration: the rise of Nazism depends on the subjacent position of women and the subjection continually reinforces the structures of Nazism and the male brutality contained therein. Burdekin is quite conscious about the necessity of an intense hierarchical structure as a method of sustaining the fragility of male power, even maleness itself. In another speculative work on the relation of the sexes, *Proud Man*, published in 1934 again under the pseudonym of Murray Constantine, Burdekin has a central character returning from the future in a dream. The character is non-gendered, considering herself/himself as human and, as a result, in the present day of the novel takes on each gender in turn, commenting on the ways of subhumans in the contemporary world ("You will understand that in my dream I could not be a person," she/he comments, "for none were in existence, but must appear to be either a woman or a man") (Burdekin, *Proud Man* 65). She/he is scathing about either sex and their behavior and speculates that the sex drive in humans is amiss and should be more like other animals, wherein the breeding period is limited and, therefore, the "sex obsession" limited too. As the outsider looking on, she/he points to the hierarchical nature of the culture she is visiting:

A privilege of class divides a subhuman society horizontally, while a privilege of sex divides it vertically. Subhumans cannot apparently exist without their societies being divided, preferably in both these ways, though the intense antagonism, either open or secret, conscious or unconscious, which privilege of either kind engenders, prevents any subhuman society from having the stability necessary to its permanent existence. (17-18)

Although class figures occasionally in her/his exploration of subhuman life, it is the relationship between the sexes that predominates the novel and that predominates her/his discussion of war:

For though a subhuman might not kill another subhuman of his own nation, there was nothing to stop a whole group or nation attacking and killing another nation, for that was against no law, it was not murder, and it was *right*. These large organised killings were called wars, and are habitual among many primitive, and all civilised nations.[. . .] A short time before the years of my dream there had been one large and important war involving many nations, and one large and important reversal of class privilege

successfully carried out by a nation, the population of which was probably greater than all our human populations combined. These two events had upset the delicate balance of the civilised world, had made the nations involved in them fearful and uneasy beyond their wont, and had tangled their *economy* probably past unravelling. (19)

Although in the novel the post-war period meant that women could enter into "all the peaceful professions" (32), boys were still valued more than girls, "and until the idea of war has lost its attractiveness for the race, or until women kill and are killed in wars as freely as men, this must always be so" (32). The fearfulness and uneasiness had resulted, however, in

the complete emergence of the sex antagonism. That which had been secret and subconscious was now open and conscious. It was hardly possible to open one of their books without coming across some expression of this sex antagonism. Whatever they wrote this uncontrollable hatred was bubbling at the bottom of their minds. As one would expect, in this sex antagonism the hatred of the men for the women was the most serious. (32)

Part of the sex antagonism of men is explained to her by the priest she (for at this time she is called Verona) first lives with after she has arrived in present time, and his statements are re-echoed later in *Swastika Night*. "All men" Andrew Gifford says, "have a contempt for women, and indeed as you will find out if you have anything to do with them, they are poor stuff, and not to be compared with the females of animals and birds. But I have always believed that they should not be such poor stuff, and sometimes I think it must be our fault, men's fault, that they are what they are" (113). Later, when she lives as Alethea with another woman Leonora Simmons, she presents the best possible resolution for the gender gap when she says

They [men and women] must stop being masculine and feminine, and become male and female. Masculinity and femininity are the artificial differences between men and women. Maleness and femaleness are the real differences. Hardly any women are female, and no men are male. You want the real difference to make the love and the work and the unit, but the artificial differences make nothing but a mess. (178-79)

Leonora is reconciled with the man she loves through her experience of living with Alethea, not because she will be happy but because she will be less unhappy (there is little or no romance here). The exploration of her unhappiness caused by the death of a bastard child (of whose existence the father was unaware) through meningitis becomes the method by which the two women explore femininity and femaleness, as Alethea is clearly puzzled as to why women would choose to be feminine. Leonora describes the feelings of guilt surrounding her daughter Cordy's death, the not being able to take care of her cub, almost with inarticulateness, sending Alethea to Aldous Huxley and Point *Point Counter Point*, where

Huxley "seems to me in that episode to be something of a sadist, writing that piece to torment poor mothers" (183).

14 It can be no coincidence that the only writer mentioned by name in *Proud Man* is Huxley in connection with his description of meningitis in *Point Counter Point*. Huxley makes use there of the death of Naomi Mitchison's nine-year-old son Geoff by the same disease. Huxley's knowledge of Geoff's illness and death had come through his relationship with Mitchison, who was, according to her biographer, "offended that Aldous had used her tormented experience as fodder for his fiction" (Benton 54). She, too, was "touched [with] guilt as a mother, although there was [as Burdekin explains about the death of Cordy], in truth, little she could have done to keep him alive" (53). Mitchison mentions Murray Constantine and *Proud Man* in her non-fiction book *The Moral Basis of Politics*, published in 1938, the same year as *Three Guineas*.

15 The *Moral Basis of Politics* is heavily informed with Mitchison's particular brand of Left-leaning Labour politics.⁶ It was written as an attempt to understand the near hopelessness of a political resolution to the rise of Fascism. She proposes a moral political life without a Christian framework and, to be truthful, her arguments are not very satisfying. Because of her waning commitment to communism, for example, she allows the idea of economic competition, admitting, however, that "The vision of competition holds not only in the economic sphere, but also in, for example, personal relations. Sex-competition is thought well of as part of the vision; both Desdemona and Othello were victims of it. Can we possibly suppose that it is compatible with the good life?" (Mitchison, *Moral Basis*, footnote, 48). The answer to this rhetorical question may be "No," but Mitchison's flirtation with the ideologies of the Soviet Union was over and she does not offer much to replace one of the fundamentals of capitalism, competition.⁷ Her discussion of pacifism is equally muddy, and through the 1930s she was ambiguous and did not commit herself in the larger political sphere to a strong pacifist position. In *The Moral Basis of Politics*, she explores her ambiguity, designating people P pacifists (of the band-wagon variety) or Pp pacifists (those devoutly committed to

⁶The formation and development of Mitchison's political leanings in the 1930s can be tracked through three volumes of autobiography: *Small Talk . . . : Memories of an Edwardian Childhood* (London: Bodley Head, 1973), *All Change Here: Girlhood and Marriage* (London: Bodley Head, 1975) and *You May Well Ask: A Memoir 1920-1940* (London: Gollancz, 1979).

⁷ Mitchison had visited the Soviet Union in 1932 and was taken by what she observed of the position of women in the new society. However much she approved of abortion as a woman's choice, she was shocked by the crudity of the abortion she saw performed at a hospital there. She recorded her thoughts about what she had seen in her novel, *We Have Been Warned*. Jill Benton is too kind in her criticism of this novel, which is badly tainted with Mitchison's patronising class consciousness. When an upper-class character very like Mitchison is raped by a member of the proletariat, she forgives him because he lives in a house with a very dirty bathroom and bad plumbing.

pacifism even in the face of death). In the end, she realizes that her short-term response to the rise of Fascism, by this time wearing the face of Hitler, "brings not peace but the sword." Then, she goes on to explain,

the short-termers agree to be the sword-point and agree also to lose their souls--to do what they know is not right--in the faith that, sheltered by their bodies, right will survive. But if this is annoyingly sentimental, let me suggest that, if Fascism wins in Europe and in England, the pacifists may die nobly, but their ideas will not survive, and they will certainly be unable to make converts in a nation which is Fascist-conditioned; whereas if Fascism is kept from them by violence, those who have used the violence will probably never be able to have or use pacifist ideas themselves--if they survive they will be too busy, too hopelessly engrossed in administrative difficulties (possibly including the severe moral difficulties of a provisional military dictatorship)--but pacifism itself with all that it implies will have a chance in the end. (Mitchison, *Moral Basis* 345)

The fallaciousness of this argument notwithstanding (it would depend on pacifists being born not made), Mitchison admits, finally, that "it may be essential for the future of the world, in so far as one can judge such things, that the long-term ideas of the true pacifists should survive." However pragmatic the short-term resolution found in violence must be, the

short-term good must vanish and change, being essentially of a given situation and not in any way transcendent, and we are willing for it to do so (as the dynamic situation changes), provided that the long-term good survives--and I believe that completely thorough Pp pacifism goes with and implies more and deeper and more creative ideas than the mere right not to be killed or kill, [. . .]. (344-45)

What is included in the transcendent is a rationing of physical and especially sexual appetites in much the same way as the protagonist suggests in *Proud Man*, and, in fact, Mitchison footnotes Burdekin's book as a possible guide to a "future good society" (364). Mitchison's own personal struggle was with "that wanting of power [which] is my own besetting and class sin" and she cites her historical novels as attempts "to turn power into something else: as with the power held by Erif, Tarrik and Philylla in *The Corn King and the Spring Queen*" (338).

16 *The Corn King and the Spring Queen* has been in print since it was first published, to great critical and popular acclaim, in 1931. The action of the novel takes place between the years 228 BC and 187 BC and is centred on the family of Erif Der. At the beginning of the novel Erif Der is still a girl, who has inherited from her mother the ability to do magic, but her father Harn Der holds most of the power in the village and surrounding countryside. In order to become chief, he insists on Erif Der marrying the present chief, Tarrik, but then on her using her magic to kill Tarrik so that her father can be his successor. The marriage takes place, but with the help of a new arrival, Sphaeros the Stoic, Tarrik resists Erif Der's magic and eventually persuades Erif Der that her love for her husband is stronger than her obligation

to her father. When she has a son, eliminating any possibility of her unforgiving father becoming chief, her father kills the child. Erif Der waits for a moment of retribution, and in a stunning portrayal of ancient fertility rituals, Erif Der murders her father.

17 Erif Der must leave the community, not only because of the patricide but because she has murdered her father during a fertility rite and that act may affect the crops and livelihood of the people. With her brother Berris Der she travels, spending a great deal of time among the Spartans and learning their ways, and waits to fulfill a prophecy that will enable her to return home, signifying that any blight she may have brought to the land has passed. Berris Der is a creative foil to Erif Der's magic. A sculptor, he struggles with ideas of beauty imposed from the outside upon his own internal sense of proportion and vision.

18 Berris Der falls in love with a Spartan woman, Philylla, competent rider and skilled archer, who also becomes a friend of Erif Der. Mitchison's characters present the difficulties inherent in the distribution of wealth and the denial of luxury, ornament, and the ideas of beauty to which Berris Der is committed. The suicidal end of the Spartans is one of the more moving passages in the book, but it is not enough to confirm the historical portrayal as accurate. What Mitchison challenges the reader with throughout the novel is the idea of change. The Spartans live, like other peoples portrayed, in a time of volatile change, and Mitchison wishes to understand the nature of change. Tarrik, for example, moves from a careless young man to one who explores the nature of what societal transformations he as chief and Corn King has brought about and whether or not these changes are healthy for the society at large. He contrasts the old life in his country with the new, questioning the morality of change and the place of the individual:

In all this, Tarrik tried to find himself. He felt profoundly that he had at some point and unknown to himself taken a step that had landed him dry and lonely outside the stream of life. He was out of harmony. And now he could not retrace his steps. Erif Der, his wife, had done the same thing and he loved her, and he was deeply anxious for her. Yet was the old Marob life harmonious? Was it part of the order of nature to work magic, steal sun and rain for your own seasons and crops, almost to alter the courses of the stars? He thought not. Perhaps it had been--before people like himself had begun to question it. Once upon a time it had been part of the order of nature for men to eat the enemies they had killed; there was nothing wrong or abhorrent about it. But now that would be a pitfall in a clear road. With time and questioning, rights become wrongs and wrongs rights. The Corn Kings before him had been satisfied. They had accepted that their lives should end, as they all had unless they had been killed or died suddenly when still in their strength, in that last way, in that queerer feast than any they had made part of before. It had been natural; that was their life reabsorbing itself into the life of Marob out of which it had come. But he, Tarrik - Charmantided -- he was not satisfied. (Mitchison, *Corn King* 252-53)

19 The exploration of change is accompanied by one projected through the character of Erif Der, who remains as outsider in each of the societies they visit and examines the role of women. The *Bildungsroman* nature of the text, then, allows Erif Der to grow from unknowing girl to knowing woman, but here Mitchison's vision falters. Focusing on a period of upheaval that reflects her own, Mitchison explores the nature of political change and the way in which that change encompasses, or more frequently does not encompass, the needs of women.

20 Begun in 1925 when Mitchison was full of enthusiasm for the future and, particularly, women's role in it, *The Corn King and the Spring Queen* was finished in 1930, by which time Mitchison was already considering a somewhat different possibility for women. By the time Mitchison finished *The Corn King and the Spring Queen*, her political horizon had shifted, and by the end of the novel Erif Der can be read as no longer the strong, willful, sometimes erring but always progressing heroine of the previous hundreds of pages. The novel has remained popular because of its strong historical grounding, romantic politics and graphic descriptions of sex and death and the life of the times. It would have been a better novel if Mitchison's political antenna had not already been recording a change in the wind for women. By 1938 and *The Moral Basis of Politics*, Mitchison's politics were muddled. In 1934 and the publication of *The Home and a Changing Civilisation*, however, she was as clear as she would ever be about the politics of gender.

21 *The Home and a Changing Civilisation* in its early pages is historically grounded in early Athens, where "As far as we can make out the Athenian home was an unimportant place, where disregarded and discouraged women led a shut-in and completely dependent life." In contrast with the historical evidence, however, the women of Aristophanes, "do not seem depressed and discouraged creatures." She cites Praxagora, "the heroine of the *Ecclesiazuses*, [who] plans a Utopia which is rather silly but has its points, and where the "home definitely comes to an end, all property is in the hands of the state, which provides for its citizens, so that no woman has to be dependent on a man." The result is that Praxagora

goes further than even the most modern sexual reformers: marriage is done away with and all relationships between men and women are completely free except that the plain and unprepossessing of both sexes are given their fair share, the state intervening in their favour. Praxagora's male interlocutor in the dialogue is profoundly shocked at the thought that no man would know (or own) his own children, but Praxagora is obviously delighted at the idea that the child's only legal parent should be its mother and that the father of all should be the impersonal state. Hence she goes back to the matriarchy or forward to Communism. (Mitchison, *The Home* 13-15)

Here is the foundation of the structure of *The Home*: rather than project a utopia, she presents a supposedly historically grounded one and works retrospectively to present day. Mitchison

weaves back and forth between centuries, ideas and changes in the status of women with her eye fixed firmly on the reasons for the present-day existence of women in the home. She cites the nineteenth century, for example, as an age which "marked the beginning of real specialization":

And, as jobs began to be specialised, and with that increasingly profit-making, so men began to take them for themselves and away from women. Men were even insisting on taking over work which had traditionally been women's. They took away, for instance, midwifery and doctoring, and it was to be another two generations before women had managed to fight their way into the profession of medicine and regain what they had lost. All kinds of things which had been home-made by women, from jam and candles to curtains and overcoats, were now made gloriously in factories by men--or by women treated like male "hands", only worse. (39)

She continues by asking a question comparable to Woolf's in *A Room of One's Own*, on why there are so few great women in history, refiguring, in a sense, the angel in the house. First she considers how young girls were when they married, and how "Once married, they were irretrievably engulfed in the home." Further,

think of the artistic temperament--always up and down, at the mercy of the thyroid or the pituitary or what-not. Think of the glooms and miseries of the poet or artist, from which he has normally to be rescued by the Kind Heart of a Woman. That should be as possible for the female as for the female poet, and is, at least, rather more possible now, though still difficult enough. But in those days--! And oh, the pressure on women to spend their time in other ways, in greasing the wheels of life for the men who drive it. The disapproval, even from the Queen, Defender of the Faith, wife of Albert, of the un-owned woman! There is still an immense amount of all that; almost every woman has to compromise; but where we moderns bend with more or less grace and insincerity, our mothers and grandmothers broke. (41)

22 Mitchison retreats from present-day speculations to the Spartans, again. Where *The Corn King and the Spring Queen* presents Spartanism as a positive force, akin to socialism in its "brotherhood of man," on reconsideration, however, Mitchison finds "The details of the Eunomia [drastic reforms of the state] [. . .] more familiar to us in 1934 than they were to early historians." "They are indeed disconcertingly familiar," she adds, "for there is a Fascist ring about them" (Mitchison, *The Home* 53). Reminiscent of the society presented in its final extreme in *Swastika Night*, Mitchison recalls that these "reforms were of course violently nationalistic, they aimed at producing the kind of citizen who would live only for nationalist ends" (54). Private ownership was curtailed, and

Everything, including the home and the family, became a part of the Spartan State. Wives no longer belonged absolutely to their husbands: not that they belonged to themselves now, but to Sparta which demanded of them that they should bear children to become the equivalent of cannon fodder. The women's own personal possessions were cut down too. Above all the boys after the age of seven became the property of

the State; they were taken out of the home and brought up in bands, living rough and learning to endure pain and hardship and become good soldiers. The little girls were less definitely taken over, but they too had some kind of physical training, mostly in connection with the religious life of the State. No weaklings were allowed to survive. The men were taken out of the home too. They took their main meal together in a military mess, even in peace time. (54-55)

The Spartan state described can be compared with the new Germany, a transformed one where "German women were further on the road to freedom than almost anywhere else." The changeover has been dramatic, focused, as it is, on the re-constituted Teutonic home. Patriarchy is again supreme:

The state has solidified itself out of the Hegelian abstract into the concrete father god, Wotan, the most sworded and hairy-bellied and prolific of them all. But the immediate representative of the state is the German father, as like Wotan as possible. The German wife is owned both by the state and by her husband. Her job is to fill the cradles and the German home, by her husband and for the state, which will in time use the cradle fillings as cannon fodder. (104-05)

23 Mitchison seems not only to be responding to current events in Germany but to the ideas of Fascism published by Oswald Mosley in his 1932 tract *The Greater Britain*. "The new German woman, the present or future wife or mother in his home, is essentially womanly," she writes, continuing:

She is large-bosomed and broad-bottomed, so modern women's fashions sit ill on her. She must have home fashions of her own suitable for the attraction of husbands but not lovers. She must not go in for either education or sport, both are unsettling. Lest she should do so in spite of the charming prospects held up before her, her educational possibilities are forcibly being taken from her. Schools and universities are being shut, especially those which practise that dreadfully equalitarian thing, co-education. Instead she is to have a year or so forcible training in domesticity and submission to the idea of a patriarchal state. (105)

Among Mosley's reformation formulae for the "salvation of this land" (Mosley 11) is an accounting for the place of women's work, since

The great majority of women do not seek, and have no time for, a career in politics. Their interests are consequently neglected, and their nominal representation is accorded to women whose one idea is to escape from the normal sphere of women and to translate themselves into men. That process in the end is never very effective, and the attempt makes such women even less qualified than the average man to deal with the questions of home and of children. Consequently, the representation and organisation for the first time of normal women, on whom the future of the race depends, are a practical political necessity. Fascism, in fact, would treat the wife and mother as one of the main pillars of the State and would rely upon her for the organisation and development of one of the most important aspects of national life. (55-56)

Mitchison considers the construction of the "normal" woman, "on whom the future of the race begins" as a threat to the gains made by women, and after tracing present-day oppressions of women in Italy and Ireland, she writes, "It should be clear by now that militarism and the traditional home go together" (Mitchison, *The Home* 107).

25 The attempt at resolution is an honest exploration of the ownership of women by men, which "has been talked about and written about and legislated about and above all lived about, for some thousands of years" (144). Her resolution recognizes the difficulties between the private and the public in the present day, while proposing a belief in pacifism that renegotiates the space between the private and the public:

personally one must be a complete pacifist, completely gentle and willing to turn the other cheek indefinitely, but *socially*, at present, one must not only be willing to fight for certain things, but also one must prepare the fight (and what one is fighting for is the possibility of a remote time when personal pacifism will be a good enough guide to social conduct). (145)

26 Mitchison's lack of resolution, which informed *The Moral Basis of Politics*, had two contributory factors. One was the text to which she constantly referred in *The Home*, Winifred Holtby's *Women and a Changing Civilisation*, published in 1934 as a precursor text to *The Home* in the Twentieth Century Library series. Throughout *The Home*, Mitchison avoided territory already considered by Holtby. The other factor was her disconcerting realization that the connection between gender and the oncoming war was as acute as the connection had been after World War I. For all her belief in human progress, it remained scarcely grounded in reality, as she so trenchantly articulated in her polemics against the encyclical letters of the Catholic Church. Where Burdekin revealed her anxieties in the dystopic, Mitchison placed them in the polemic. Neither could offer a solution to the growing threat of Fascism and its dependence on gender constructions and a profound misogyny. It would take Virginia Woolf's *Three Guineas* to do that.

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Building the Nation: Narrating Women and the Algerian War

By Annedith M. Schneider, Sabanci University, Turkey

Abstract:

Traditional accounts of war define it as a masculine enterprise and war narratives thus as the work of men. Such accounts have been used to justify a special role for men within the nation, as wartime experience supposedly makes them eminently qualified to be not only military but also civilian leaders. While one might begin by challenging the premise that war experience qualifies one for a special civilian status, readers of European literature have also challenged the idea that war narratives are the work of men alone. As critics rediscover and re-place women's narratives of war within the canon of war literature, they have focused in particular on redrawing the boundaries between the frontlines and the home front. [...] Where women have joined in opposing colonial occupation of their homes and land, such as in the Algerian Revolution, the 'frontline' involves entire regions, and women are often in the middle of combat.

1 Traditional accounts of war define it as a masculine enterprise and war narratives thus as the work of men. Such accounts have been used to justify a special role for men within the nation, as wartime experience supposedly makes them eminently qualified to be not only military but also civilian leaders. While one might begin by challenging the premise that war experience qualifies one for a special civilian status, readers of European literature have also challenged the idea that war narratives are the work of men alone. As critics rediscover and re-place women's narratives of war within the canon of war literature, they have focused in particular on redrawing the boundaries between the frontlines and the home front. Such redrawing is particularly appropriate in the context of civil war and other conflicts fought within national borders. Where women have joined in opposing colonial occupation of their homes and land, such as in the Algerian Revolution, the "frontline" involves entire regions, and women are often in the middle of combat. One might expect therefore that such conflicts would necessarily accord a larger place to women's narratives, but official Algerian national memory of the war (as manifested in memorials and the paying of veterans' pensions, for example) has proven short-lived, in large part because it only considers those men and the extremely small number of women who held military positions in the war. Rather than focus on such famous, but unrepresentative military women, Algerian writer Assia Djebar rewrites the story of the Algerian Revolution, interweaving official, written histories of Algeria with the oral stories of ordinary women who participated in the struggle for independence. Valorizing women's contributions in non-military roles and acknowledging their sacrifices, these latter stories imagine women as central to national history and suggest a vision of nation building that might include both men and women.

2 Much scholarly work on war narratives has focused on literature about the two European World Wars. The typical writer of war stories has been seen as a male soldier-poet who writes his experiences from the front and who is "understood to be a gifted veteran who responded to the test of his masculinity by shaping realist texts about the trenches, blood brotherhood, and political disillusionment" (Higonnet, "Cassandra" 144-45). Women who wrote of men's experiences, or more significantly, women who wrote about their own experiences in war went unpublished, or if eventually published,¹ faced harsh criticism, as "critics have dismissed women's writings about the war as inauthentic, neurotic or unfeminine", as Margaret R. Higonnet notes ("Cassandra" 149). Women who wrote enthusiastically of war were accused of jingoism and women who showed the hypocrisy or day-to-day misery of war were criticized for writing works that were demoralizing to the very men who were defending them.

3 Feminist criticism of war literature in European contexts often seeks to redefine the idea of the "war novel" in terms of both location and content, including not only the supposedly masculine and public spaces of the trenches and battle, but also the feminine and private spaces of the "home front" and economic deprivation. Such criticism looks at stories by and about women serving on the front as nurses, ambulance drivers, cooks and so on, as well as at narratives where women at home cope with food shortages and illness, even as their work in industry and agriculture provides the necessities of survival for both home and front. In civil wars, in particular, any distinction between home front and frontlines largely disappears as do, to some extent, distinctions between masculine and feminine spaces. The "front" may be the market, the streets outside one's school, the fields one works in to provide food for a family, or even one's own home. In the case of Algeria, the domestic spaces traditionally occupied by women were often more of a frontline than the mountains where the largely male resistance took refuge, far from the reach of French troops. As one of the narrators in Djebbar's novel *Fantasia, An Algerian Cavalcade* describes a guerilla attack against the French, she notes that following the attack, "[O]ur men ran away: they didn't want to wait for the enemy's reprisals. We women were left to bear the brunt!" (206). Given this unavoidable involvement for women and their courage in confronting the French, it is not surprising that they might have expected some formal recognition of their contributions after Independence. As Higonnet argues, "[C]ivil wars, which take place on 'home' territory have more potential than other wars to transform women's expectations [...]. Once a change in government can be conceived, sexual politics can also become an overt political issue" ("Civil

¹ Jane Marcus provides a wealth of information on little known or recently rediscovered women's narratives of the first World War and contemporary responses to them.

Wars" 80). Even though the Algerian War is not usually thought of as a civil war, but rather as a struggle to overthrow an occupying power, Higonnet's comments hold true in that the Algerian War took place on 'home' territory, at least as far as the Algerians and French settlers (if not the French army) are concerned. War narratives of the Algerian Revolution suggest the possibility of change as they show women crossing the previously rigid boundaries of male space and taking on "male" roles and responsibilities.

4 Sexual politics, however, were definitely not part of the agenda in the Algerian War, or perhaps it would be better to say changes in sexual politics were not on the agenda. Women's participation in the recognized military arm of the resistance was actively discouraged, and only a very small number of women actually left their families to join the maquis. Once in the maquis, women found family structures recreated with their comrades named brothers and their paternal commanders who were quick to insist on marriage at the slightest hint of impropriety. When women did participate, it was in a decidedly traditional capacity. As historian Monique Gadant points out, "Women's presence was tolerated only in so far as they were confined to 'feminine' tasks" (84, my translation), such as providing shelter, food and medicine or working as nurses. Because women carried out many of the same tasks they might have had in peacetime circumstances, their efforts were not recognized as special war efforts:

If a man carried food to the armed fighters at great personal risk, he was called a 'fighter.' A woman doing the same was called a 'helper.' If a man risked his life to hide armed fighters or wanted political leaders, he was called a 'fighter.' A woman doing the same was simply performing the female task of 'nurturing.' Nor was she considered a fighter when she collected fuel or food for the fighters, or carried their guns, or guided them through the mountains. She was merely helping the men. (Helie-Lucas 106)

Thus, anecdotal accounts suggest that many women were involved in such "support" positions, but because they were not part of the formal military structure, their contributions went largely unnoticed and were quickly forgotten after the war. Helie-Lucas notes that women made up only 3.25% of registered veterans (105), although "[w]e can consider that most peasant women were involved in the Algerian Revolution" (106).

5 Assia Djébar's novel *Fantasia, An Algerian Cavalcade* gives an individual voice to this history, recounting and recreating the narratives of women who participated in the Algerian War. Juxtaposing them with official written histories, she gives the two kinds of narratives equal importance. Djébar's novel accords the space and the opportunity to recount the experiences of women members of the resistance in the Independence War who, although they may have participated as fully as their brothers, fathers and husbands, were never

decorated, rewarded with veterans' pensions or asked for their stories, but on the contrary, were encouraged to return quietly to their traditional domestic roles. Miriam Cooke argues that Algerian women were unaware of the transformative nature of their participation in the revolution, and were therefore unable to put it into writing, or I would add, use it to consolidate permanent gains in civil rights:

[L]iterary evidence affirms that during the Revolution the Algerian women were not conscious of their opportunities [...]. Consequently, it is not so surprising that they made no attempt to inscribe into the war text experiences that may have been transformative. When they had written, they had done so with little awareness of what military participation had meant. [...] The Algerian Revolution came too soon in the history of modern Arab women's discursive activism to serve as a catalyst for the inscription of feminist issues into the nationalist agenda. [...] [T]he difference between the Algerian and the Lebanese women who participated in their two wars was that the Algerian women did not have a feminist context, for example, no indigenous, independent feminist organization, within which to situate their struggle. ("WO-man" 185-186)

Many representations of women's experience in the war only surfaced years after the end of the war. Even in the case of Djébar's novel, published in 1985, such experience is presented in a mediated fashion. First of all, although women do tell their own stories, they are orchestrated within a larger structure in which a semi-autobiographical narrator has the dominant voice throughout the novel. Secondly, despite the narrator's frequent intervention, the reader learns very little of her own wartime experience. Just one chapter details her preparations for marriage in Paris, as she and her fiancé dodge the police and plan to join the resistance organizing in Tunisia on the Algerian border. In a novel which includes long passages concerning the narrator's childhood and adolescence, this paucity of information about her time in the war, as well as the geographical distance, is striking.

6 Making a case for the inclusion of women's experience in the national narrative is important if women's demands for full citizenship and equality are to be met. Djébar's novel, however, also suggests the existence of narratives that remain unheard either because their tellers themselves have chosen silence, or because they are told in a language incomprehensible to their audience. In one instance, a woman providing food and shelter for combatants describes how she had instructed her adopted daughter to behave if she were ever questioned by the French. She told the girl, "If they question you, begin to cry! If they ask, 'Who comes to visit your mother? What does she do?' you must begin to cry immediately...If you say a word, they'll ask more questions! Just cry! That's all you must do!" (160). The woman then describes the girl's actions: "And that's what she did. She burst into tears, she rolled about in the sand, she ran away in a flood of tears" (160). Of course, this scene is not,

strictly speaking, one of silence, but rather of communication that the men in power are incapable of understanding - the language of the body. While the soldiers interpret the girl's actions as meaningless hysteria, from the women's point of view, it is anything but meaningless. Significantly, her actions are learned (non-)communication taught to her by the older woman. The young girl's cries constitute a protest against an oppressive power that affords her no other acceptable "language," in Djébar's terms, than that of the body. While it may not be a permanent solution or a means to secure concrete political rights, it nonetheless has a strategic, contextual value.

7 Thus it becomes clear that while women's narratives of the war have been ignored, misinterpreted, or silenced by the cultural and political climate following Independence, women themselves may have chosen and may continue to choose silence. Sometimes, as in the case quoted above, remaining silent is a refusal to give information to the enemy. In others it is necessary to protect themselves against informers. More importantly, however, even when a woman is politically on the winning side of a war, her personal story may be one of defeat: rape, loss of family and friends, or disappointed hopes for a better life after the war. The women whose stories Djébar gathers describe how they organized their lives in the villages, when the men had fled to join the *maquis*, the threat of rape becomes apparent, but is almost never voiced directly: "As soon as we young women saw the French coming we never stayed inside. The old women stayed in the houses with the children: we went to hide in the undergrowth or near the wadi. If the enemy caught us we never said a word" (206-207). Rape itself is the great unspoken in these narratives, referred to by the women only as "damage" (202). The only direct reference to rape is, in fact, mediated through the narrator, who, as she reflects on one of the stories she is told, imagines what the storyteller has not said:

Once the soldiers were gone, once she has washed, tidied herself up, plaited her hair and tied the scarlet ribbon, all these actions reflected in the brackish water of the wadi, the woman, every woman, returns, one hour or two hours later, advances to face the world to prevent the chancre being opened in the tribal circle [...] rape will not be mentioned, will be respected. Swallowed. Until the next alarm.(202)

By not speaking, the women "seize on the silence and build a barrier against misfortune" (202). Djébar's work both recovers women's lost stories and valorizes chosen silence. While one might object that these are indeed restricted choices, given a context in which "the woman who raises her voice" is "the only really guilty woman, the only one you could despise with impunity" (203), Djébar's work shows the value of strategic silences in confrontations not only between colonized and colonizer, but also between women and men. Perhaps, Djébar suggests, in contexts where one's voice cannot be understood or can only

bring harm, silence itself becomes a kind of power, albeit a defensive rather than offensive power. Unlike the silence that withholds information from enemy soldiers and thus contributes to the physical safety of the fighting forces, silence in these cases has to do with protecting the honor and image of the family, at whatever cost to the woman - not unlike the way women themselves silenced their claims to equality in the interests of national unity following Independence.

8 It is true that war experience, whether told by men or women may defy telling, but the silence of women in Djébar's novel is very different from the kind of silence sometimes seen in men's war stories. In contrast to the propaganda and jingoism of the home front, male writers may find it difficult to put their experiences into words without falling into cliché. As Higonnet notes, "By contrast to the braggart civilian, the mark of the real soldier who has witnessed the war may be silence" ("Not So Quiet" 209). But Higonnet's comments are in the context of the literature of World War I by men, whose participation in the war was never in doubt. Since most women are presumed not to have contributed to the war effort in any special way, their silence serves as confirmation of this view. As Trinh T. Minh-ha writes in another context, "[W]e face the danger of inscribing femininity as absence, a lack and blank interjecting the importance of enunciation" (59). This, of course, has consequences when it comes to dividing up the spoils and responsibilities in the new nation. One of Djébar's narrators reminds the reader of this. During the war, her own home and farm were burned to the ground by the French, a common practice against those thought to be supporting the rebellion. After the war, a man whom she had hidden from the French is in charge of re-assigning abandoned houses, but he denies her request for a house. As the woman explains, "They didn't give me a thing... You can see where I'm living now, I have to pay to occupy this hut. 'You pay or you don't put a foot inside!' they told me" (200).

9 While the examples of women denied pensions and other material rewards for war service are numerous and of great importance for the individuals concerned - especially where the war resulted in the destruction of their property or the death of husbands and sons- at a national level, women's access to vote and civil rights takes center stage. In postwar contexts war narratives are also accounts of nation building and a way of talking about national identity and defining who deserves to be counted as a citizen. When these narratives exclude women as tellers and characters, nation building itself becomes a masculine endeavor. In Europe, for example, following the first World War, women's service during the war is seen as one of the reasons women were finally granted the vote, often decades after the beginning of suffrage campaigns (Vining 369). In contrast, in France where the military strongly resisted

any official role for women in the war, women were among the last in Europe to receive the vote (Vining 363), having to wait for and serve in another world war before finally receiving the vote.

10 Marnia Lazreg points out that the 1963 Charter of Algiers and the 1976 National Charter in Algeria "reiterate the state's commitment to women's rights as a result of women's participation in the war. In other words, women's rights to citizenship are presented as compensation for their struggle for the independence of their country rather than as unqualified rights" (133). In contrast to the European example, however, these rights did not turn out to be irrevocable, and in practice, were often ignored even from the beginning. When the Algerian parliament passed the infamous Family Code in 1984, therefore, it came as no great surprise. The Code enshrined in law a host of conservative practices supposedly in keeping with Islamic law, including unequal divorce rights, polygamy, and the obligation of a woman's submission to her husband (Lazreg 135). The timing does not seem coincidental. As the Code was passed, young women who had been children or who had been born after the end of the war were reaching adulthood. If political rights are perceived as a reward for service during the independence war, then those who had not participated in the war could hardly expect to enjoy those privileges. Monique Gadant, however, argues that the Family Code actually changed very little in women's lives, "but it fixed in law what had been customary, a fundamental inequality of which women, conscious or not, were victims" ("La situation" 24, my translation).

11 Some observers of the situation in Algeria, in fact, argue that women's subordinate status came to be seen as a mark of Algeria's difference from the French colonizer and thus as the foundation of Algerian identity. Since the French had used women's liberation from the supposedly oppressive customs of Islam (in particular, the veil) as one justification for colonization, Algerian women who claimed such rights for themselves were inevitably accused of siding with the colonizer. Winifred Woodhull and Monique Gadant both argue that women's status could not be changed in the newly independent nation because their subordinate status defined the new nation in opposition to the colonial power. Woodhull even suggests that, in the context of Algeria, gender difference is not only an important category for considering nationalism, but that it actually constitutes the Algerian nation:

As the embodiment of conflicting forces that simultaneously compose and disrupt the nation, women are the guarantors of national identity, no longer simply as guardians of traditional values but as symbols that successfully contain the conflicts of the new historical situation. At the same time, women are the supreme threat to national identity insofar as its endemic instability can be assigned to them. [. . .] women symbolize and are called upon to stabilize Algeria's irreducibly contradictory identity

in and through their 'present condition' of subordination. [. . .] women's exclusion increasingly constitutes the Algerian nation after independence. (11, emphasis in the original)

This is not unlike the experience of women in other revolutionary or wartime contexts, in which women's demands are either postponed until the "real" struggle is over or put aside on the assumption that their issues will be solved when independence or victory is achieved. Obviously, this ordering of priorities which subordinates women and their rights to the cause of nation building means that these issues are always left for another day. And those women who persist in seeking their rights during and even after the war are labeled disloyal since their criticism is seen to provide support to detractors of the new nation.

12 The narrative must change so that women as equal partners can take part in constructing national identity. War is such a foundational myth of most nations that if women's narratives are excluded, women themselves are excluded from the process of nation building. Rewriting and rediscovering women's war stories is necessary if women's symbolic role within the nation is to change. In the case of Algeria, rather than trying to invent a past for women as military heroines which is largely false, narratives like Djébar's valorize women's other roles and sacrifices during war, even while acknowledging those few women who did serve in traditional military roles. Rather than insist on being counted in as one of the men, Djébar's narrative serves as one example of how "female writers have challenged the fundamental definition of war itself" (Higonnet, "Not So Quiet" 208), thus redefining the terms for membership in the national club replacing women within the national struggle and re-claiming women's legitimate active role in rebuilding the nation.

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Paulina Palmer. *Lesbian Gothic: Transgressive Fictions*. London and New York: Cassell, 1999.

By Konstanze Kutzbach, University of Cologne, Germany

1 Covering a wide range of examples from the last three decades, Paulina Palmer's book, *Lesbian Gothic: Transgressive Fictions*, provides a thorough and multi-faceted analysis of the development of lesbian Gothic fiction with regard to the changing representations of lesbian/feminist issues. As a starting point of her analysis she draws a connection between the two terms under discussion ("lesbian" and "gothic") and argues that both are characterized by the aspects of marginality and versatility. In fact, as she states, it is the marginality and versatility of the genre itself that render it an apt vehicle for feminist/lesbian/queer concerns, which likewise centre on marginal and volatile subjects. Focussing on the transgressive potential of the genre, Palmer's study takes a primarily socio-cultural approach and analyzes how socio-political changes and developments in gender/queer culture and theory have intensified the transgressive dimension of lesbian Gothic writing:

Novels and stories produced in this period make interesting reading since, while differing markedly in style and ideological perspective, they share a common cultural context. In fictional form they rework and contribute to the debates about sexuality and politics that have informed the lesbian movement since its advent in the 1970s. (4-5)

2 The book is structured according to four issues, all of which bear lesbian and feminist subversive potential: the witch and rebellious femininity / spectral visitation: the return of the repressed / the vampire: transgressive sexuality / the Gothic thriller. It traces the relationship between these issues and their socio-political circumstances mainly from a diachronic (sometimes synchronic) perspective. In doing so, it employs a variety of critical positions and approaches ranging from realist to postmodern, like Freud's "return of the repressed," Butler's notion of performativity, or Kristeva's concept of the abject. As Palmer outlines in the preface and the introduction to the book, criticism of lesbian Gothic fiction did not really start until the 1990s (e.g. Terry Castle. *The Apparitional Lesbian* [1993]), and lesbian gothic writing has - despite the popularity of the genre - been denied sufficient critical attention. In fact, she refers to her own book as providing "the first substantial discussion it has received" (Palmer: vii).

3 The chapter "The witch and rebellious femininity" covers a range of representations from the witch "as a signifier of a separate cultural space" (30), as is the case in Hanrahan's *The Albatross Muff* (1978) and Tennant's *The Bad Sister* (1978), which are informed by

radical feminist idea(l)s, to representations that reflect and are influenced by a postmodern perspective, like Winterson's *Sexing the Cherry* (1989) or Donoghue's *Kissing the Witch* (1997), which conceive of female/lesbian identity as a patriarchal construct and projection that women seek to manipulate through "a performative act of self-invention" (56). The thematic changes are accompanied by stylistic changes which witness a movement away from representations of emotional intensity to forms of (self-) parody.

4 In her analysis of "spectral visitation," Palmer traces the topic's appropriation and modification from a lesbian perspective since the 1970s. Especially in the 1980s and 1990s writers and critics, as for example Molleen Zanger (*Gardenias Where There Are None*, 1994), Jeanette Winterson (*The Passion*, 1987) or Terry Castle (1993) and Diana Fuss (1991), were concerned with sexuality and the body as well as the Freudian concept of "the return of the repressed." These concepts centring on the notion of "desire" are the basis of a range of different representations which show a growing emphasis on the physical qualities of desire, and which, as Palmer states, again testify to the influence of social aspects of lesbian culture on literature: It is the "liberal approach to sex which characterizes present-day lesbian and queer culture" (63) that has enabled the shift from the decarnalization of lesbian desire as found in earlier periods of writing (such as the seventies) to an emphasis of its carnal or physical qualities. Through the appropriation of "images and scenarios from earlier Gothic texts" (62) from a lesbian perspective, "[t]opics of sexuality, memory and childhood ... assume a newly transgressive slant" (62).

5 The following chapter, "The vampire: transgressive sexuality," is concerned with the lesbian appropriation of the vampire motif as most explicitly transgressive:

Whereas the witch is used by Hanrahan and Tennant to explore the disruptive effects of female eroticism, and the spectral visitor, as illustrated by the novels of Martinac and Zanger, act as a signifier of repressed desire, the vampire, on account of her connections with blood and oral sex, is explicitly sexual in significance, carrying associations of a perverse eroticism that violates accepted taboos (101).

The texts discussed in this chapter, rather than aiming at a normalization of lesbian relations stress their transgressive potential by celebrating the difference and otherness of the image of the lesbian. Again, Palmer traces the relation between different currents in lesbian/queer politics/culture and literary representations, ranging from the humorous approach in Jody Scott's *I, Vampire* (1984), which parodies essentialism and the exaggerated emotional pride attributed to the Gay liberation movement in the seventies, to works like Jewelle Gomez' *The Gilda Stories* (1991), which exemplifies the potential transgressive complexity of lesbian Gothic fiction. Gomez's novel makes use of conventions from multiple genres, such as the

historical romance, the family saga and the "coming out" narrative, and shows a great complexity in terms of character conception by providing a psychologically elaborated image of the vampire. It presents an ambiguous and subtle assessment of lesbian identity through the protagonist Gilda's struggle to locate herself with regard to different social influences she is exposed to. The novel incorporates aspects like ethnicity (her memories of being persecuted due to her ethnic identity) or family structures (her introduction to the vampire family which "depends not on the Law of the Father but on the direct transmission of blood/sexual pleasure" (122)). The novel, which thus questions traditional roles and conventions, is characterized by a pessimistic and dystopian view of different prominent political issues from the 1980s, as, for example, the "backlash against homosexuality" (120).

6 The experimental use of genre is the central focus of the last chapter of this study. Palmer analyzes how Gothic motifs modify or counteract the generic conventions of the thriller, thus rendering ambivalent traditional concepts of justice or the conception of the sleuth itself. In doing so, the chapter focuses on the intersection between conceptions of the sleuth and the heroine in selected works of fiction, and relates questions of lesbian identity to themes like "voyeurism" and "secrets." Vicki P. McConnell (*Mrs Porter's Letter*, 1982) and Rebecca O'Rourke (*Jumping the Cracks*, 1987) negotiate lesbian identity by thematizing "society's relegation of the lesbian to the realm of the abject" (133) by means of focussing on "incidents of homophobia" and "acts of male violence," respectively (133). Schulman and Wings, in their fiction from the late eighties/early nineties, while still thematizing "the typecasting of the lesbian as abject" (133), present an innovative and more ambivalent treatment informed by postmodern characteristics, thus betraying a new level of complexity and sophistication of the genre: "Reacting against the idealized 'politically correct' image of the lesbian as sleuth ... they concentrate on exploring the imperative of lesbian desire..." (133). Another aspect that situates the two writers in the realm of the postmodern and queer is their preoccupation with the performative nature of (gender) identity.

7 Palmer concludes her study by summing up the shared features with regard to thematic, stylistic, and generic conventions underlying the development of lesbian Gothic fiction. The movement towards a postmodern and queer context characterized by performative concepts of identity witnesses an increasing amount of complexity, radicality, (parodic) self-reflexivity and -consciousness. By means of revisiting the figure of the lesbian in Gothic fiction, this study provides a complex survey of how different versions of lesbian appropriation, linked by certain themes and conventions, challenge the hetero-patriarchal norm via transgression, and thus re-negotiate lesbian identity and sexuality:

At the simplest level of transformation the lesbian, instead of existing as an absence or silence in the narrative or being assigned the role of monster, as is often the case in the Gothic texts of the past, is credited with an identity and a viewpoint. She is permitted to emerge from the closet (or in the case of the lesbian vampire, the coffin!) and recount her own story (23).

This book, which complements and reworks issues from Palmer's previous works, such as contemporary lesbian and feminist writing, is an overdue contribution to this field of study. It is of interest to literary critics as well as scholars concerned with feminist/gender/queer studies.

Penelope Deutscher. *A Politics of Impossible Difference: The Later Work of Luce Irigaray*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2002.

By Miriam Wallraven, University of Tübingen, Germany

1 Penelope Deutscher's study on Luce Irigaray revolves around a series of questions which have long troubled critics: "Why and how did Irigaray attempt to transform a philosophy emphasizing sexual difference into the basis for pro-feminist social and institutional reform? Why did she and other French feminist intellectuals turn away from the language of equal rights self-evident to the feminisms of most earlier historical periods?" (9). Deutscher provides us with a sophisticated but very readable analysis of Irigaray's works, which is not only focused on the later works (as the subtitle of the book announces), but which incorporates Irigaray's whole œuvre from *Le langage des déments* (1973) to *Between East and West* (2002).

2 Deutscher does not open another round of the feminist "equality versus difference" debate, but instead shows that the premises of Irigaray's philosophical theories are much more complex. Her study centres around the phrase "impossible difference", which highlights Irigaray's play with paradoxes. The fundamental idea is that "difference" is free of connotations which have over centuries restrained or defined women. This in turn implies that this difference does not contain an essence and that it is thus "impossible". This opens up a number of recurring paradoxes which Deutscher combines in order to analyse Irigaray's intersections of multiculturalism and feminism. Irigaray does not accept the opposition of equality and difference that has governed feminist debate for so long because she regards sexual difference as a means to achieve equality. In her introduction, Deutscher states that "I situate Irigaray's work in the context of contemporary debates about the politics of performativity, recognition, multiculturalism, pro-diversity, and identity politics. I propose dialogues between her work and contemporary American feminist, legal, poststructuralist, and postcolonial theory. I also read her from the perspective of Jacques Derrida's later work" (6). These plans succeed brilliantly which to a great extent depends on the accessibility of the text that is achieved by a repetitively circular style built up around the many questions that Deutscher poses. Since Luce Irigaray has repeatedly been criticised for giving more importance to sexual difference than to issues of multiculturalism and race, Deutscher pays particular attention to Irigaray's way of approaching the relationship between feminism and multiculturalism.

3 The first chapter "Sexual Difference as a Basis of Equality" serves as a comprehensive

introduction to Irigaray's œuvre as a whole. Language already plays a crucial role in Irigaray's early texts such as *This Sex Which is Not One*, where she argues that political equality has to be endorsed while at the same time issuing a critique of the language of equality. Critics have accused Irigaray of supporting traditional binary views of the sexes with views of women as emotional, passive, irrational and close to nature. However, Irigaray herself explains that she in no way wants to create and support sexual difference in essentialist binary views. Instead she states that no content can be attributed to the idea of woman.

4 Deutscher makes it clear that like Beauvoir and other equality feminists, Irigaray is concerned with the question of how women and femininity have been represented in Western history and philosophy. In her best-known *Speculum of the Other Woman*, as well as in several other works, Irigaray argues that women have been regarded as the other and have "served as mirrors sustaining masculine identity" (11). With the language of difference, she argues, women are no longer acknowledged as either the other/opposite of men or the same or complement of men, but can for the first time be regarded in their own right. Here the pervading notion of impossibility comes into play, which Deutscher makes very clear in summarising: "Once one accepts that there is no 'as woman' embodied in women's historical options of male equivalent, opposite or complement, it is clear that acting or speaking as a woman is an impossible gesture" (12). Irigaray problematises women's relational identities and the fact that our society has made it impossible to think of distinct male and female subjectivities, although she never states what they would consist of. However, the impossibility to conceive of this difference reveals much about our society, she argues. In order to create new identities, the impossibility of thinking about this difference has to be acknowledged. Therefore Irigaray challenges the belief that equality should be the basis upon which excluded groups should try to gain admittance to formerly prohibited spheres. Deutscher concludes her first chapter with the general insight that "Irigaray means her feminism of difference to act as a useful transformation, not an abandonment of, equality politics" (22) and concretises this thesis in the following chapters.

5 Chapter two traces Irigaray's views on language throughout her œuvre. Over the course of her writing life - particularly in *Parler n'est jamais neutre* - Irigaray criticises her earlier stance of impartial neutrality which she took in works such as *Le langage des déments*, as she comes to the realisation that discourse cannot be sex-neutral. Deutscher works out very clearly that Irigaray's main concern, the effacement of the possibility of sexual difference that originates from depicting women according to a masculine reference point, "implicitly indicates the possibility of sexual difference. Irigaray plays with logic. If there is an

exclusion, there must be something (even if it is no more than a mere possibility) to exclude" (28). Deutscher repeatedly draws attention to Irigaray's rhetorical devices and to her philosophical use of paradox or hypothesis. But ultimately Deutscher manages to show that Irigaray's way of approaching the issues of female representation and sexual difference yields important insights and stimulates new thoughts on old impasses: "Commentary on Irigaray's work has been exercised by the question of whether or not there is sexual difference. But Irigaray reroutes this question. Her point is that western culture has rendered sexual difference impossible and that this should concern us, regardless" (30).

6 Chapter three, entitled "Rethinking the Politics of Recognition", deals with matters of institutional blindness and the lack of recognition of sexual difference. Issues of recognition are discussed in connection with cultural diversity. Irigaray's primary goal is to provide space and rights for identities which are still in the process of developing and which might be different in an as yet indefinable way. Deutscher takes great pains to work out that the contents of sexual difference are constantly left open in Irigaray's work, as "a pair of empty brackets" (49). Here, a development in Irigaray's thinking can be found. Whereas her early works (such as *Speculum*) mimic and exaggerate traditional notions of femininity and women in order to render them absurd, her later works are dominated by the idea of sexual difference as "anticipated, abstract possibility" (49).

7 Chapter four deals with issues of performativity and begins with an introduction to John Austin's theory of speech acts. Irigaray's critics have emphasised that her ideas on the recognition of difference in a legal context have no immediate power, as Irigaray does not occupy a position of institutional authority. At first glance, this appears self-evident and many critics have castigated Irigaray for having the naïveté to think otherwise. However, Deutscher convincingly shows that another approach to performativity is needed here, which is based on the linguistic differentiation between perlocutionary and illocutionary speech acts. She proposes not to judge Irigaray's texts with respect to the consequences which might arise from them (in constitutional or legal terms) but with respect to what her words are already effecting as an act of declaration. Turning to Derrida, Deutscher likens Irigaray's "bill of sexuate rights" with the Declaration of Independence, since in both cases "the subjects formally entitled to the declared rights precede their legal recognition" (67). Deutscher not only repeatedly highlights paradoxes and circular logic in Irigaray's texts, but she also makes their function plausible, referring to many different authors and debates in order to delimit or compare Irigaray's approach. The logic of performativity is indeed a circular one: "Their imagined performativity highlights that Irigaray's sexuate rights are not justified by a prior state of

sexual difference. Further, Irigaray does not argue that as cause-effect relation, the rights would produce sexual difference. But if a culture of sexual difference ever materializes, it might justify the rights" (70).

8 In the fifth chapter entitled "Sexuate Genres", Deutscher argues that Irigaray's ideal is a culture in which sexed subjects not only appropriate others for stabilising their own identity, but is one which would be largely oriented towards acknowledging the other as someone who always remains "not me" and "not mine". This has cultural as well as gender-related implications. Deutscher discusses identity theories from Freud through Merleau-Ponty to Lacan and argues that Irigaray's aim is to imagine a culture in which mediation between subjects replaces the culture of appropriation which we know. Instead of uttering "I love you", Irigaray prefers to emphasise this mediation by replacing it by "I love to you". Mediation according to Irigaray requires participation in what Deutscher terms "sexuate genres" ("genre" cannot wholly be equated with the English "gender" but leads in a similar direction). This is a hypothetical and purely imaginary identity but means that one's relation to women is at the centre of the imaginary identity of woman.

9 Chapter six is concerned with the role of the divine in a politics of difference. Irigaray's interest in religious and spiritual matters pervades her whole *œuvre*, especially in the form of feminist reinterpretations of traditional religious texts. Deutscher traces Irigaray's arguments about the split between man and the transcendent divine, a split which entails the othering of women. Irigaray envisions another kind of deity altogether in arguing for a conception of the divine which is not transcendent, but instead realised in the here and now and connected to the body. Chapter seven, entitled "Interrogating an Unasked Question: Is there Sexual Difference?", repeats, reassesses and deepens previous arguments. Paradoxes and impossibility are once again presented as being important for a culture that prescribes discourses on equality, sameness, negation and complementarity. Sexual difference thus has to be formulated as a cultural impossibility in order to become aware of what our culture refuses to think. Chapter Eight confronts accusations of Irigaray's heterosexual bias in examining her ideas of relations between lovers and friends. Shifts in Irigaray's focus throughout her works complicate the analysis of this question. While she first tends to expose the failure of the appropriation of the other, her later work de-emphasises this point and neglects a critical perspective on appropriation. Her examples focus on heterosexual relations and Deutscher argues that this creates a problem as long as Irigaray presents the "genres" as potentially absolutely different. If Irigaray's arguments are taken further (which Deutscher does convincingly), it becomes clear that it is the subjects themselves which are different

regardless of their relationship to different genres. This difference is then present in every relationship and would apply to homosexual as well as heterosexual relationships.

10 While Chapter nine once again turns to Irigarayan language philosophy and linguistics (especially focusing on Irigaray's critique of Sartre), Chapter Ten finally supplies an analysis of Irigaray's views on cultural difference. This chapter must be placed after an in-depth analysis of Irigaray's ideas of sexual difference since Deutscher poses the question of "whether Irigaray's politics of impossible difference addresses, or offers the potential to address, the thinking of cultural difference" (165). What in Deutscher's opinion greatly distinguishes these two topics is that while Irigaray regards a politics of sexual difference as impossible, cultural difference appears to be more possible. This is mainly due to Irigaray's writings which partly idealize the East (*Entre orient et occident*) and in which she does not adequately reflect on her own appropriation of the other. Deutscher stresses the reason for this: as Irigaray denounces the West as a whole, she is prone to idealisations of Eastern cultures, although her ideas on sexual difference could easily provide a model for a critical rethinking of the topic of cultural difference.

11 Deutscher's conclusion weaves together the many strands that she has discussed and serves as a very accessible round-up. Her main criticism of Irigaray focuses on the fact that Irigaray is not consistent in her concept of difference as impossible, which becomes clear in her treatment of the culturally different. Deutscher ends her study with the statement: "It is intriguing to consider the possibility of an Irigarayan approach to race and cultural difference inflected by the terms of her approach to sexual difference" (193). One great merit of the study is that Deutscher already considers this possibility instead of merely stating it, thus providing creative and stimulating approaches to Irigaray's theory and offering possible practical applications.

12 On the whole, Deutscher's book is a thorough and comprehensive study of Irigaray's works, one which is unique in its theoretical groundings with respect to many debates (post-colonial, feminist, linguistic, philosophical). Readers will find analyses of both Irigaray's well-known and lesser-known writings, while being safely accompanied through the "arbitrary leap of faith" (101) which must be made in order to access Irigaray's texts. However, two minor issues might be criticised. The first is Deutscher's approach to the definition of "feminism." Although it is central to the topic, she does not critically reflect upon the term and its historical implications. She places too much emphasis on French Feminists' (especially of course Irigaray's) new and absolute position as the philosophers of difference and, in doing so, disregards that there have been (non-French) feminists throughout

history who have reflected on issues of difference and the representation of the feminine before (Virginia Woolf among others). The lack of even a mention of such positions, however, is likely due to a certain "anxiety of influence" on the part of French Feminists themselves, who avoid drawing attention to the possible influences of previous feminist writers on their own writing. However, a treatment of feminism, difference and representation in a historical framework would of course exceed the scope of the book. Another feature of the book which might be regarded as weakness by some, although I found it helpful and immensely stimulating, concerns Deutscher's style and structure. As Irigaray's concept of the paradoxical impossibility of difference is hard to grasp (a problem many critics have been unable to solve), Deutscher's study works with constant repetitions, variations and an extensive use of questions. While this may trouble some readers, I found that this circular approach not only does justice to Irigaray's complexity, but makes it possible to connect many different topics within Irigaray's work and thus yields an engaging and differentiated analysis.

**Dimple Godiwala. *Breaking the Bounds. Feminist Dramatists Writing in the
Mainstream since c. 1980.***

By Tina Wald, University of Cologne, Germany

1 Dimple Godiwala's aim is to give a detailed analysis of contemporary plays by feminist dramatists and to show how they have entered, and thus effectively changed, the British dramatic mainstream, or rather the "malestream" of English, male, white, heterosexual, middle-class, leftwing dramatic writing. Following Foucault's claim that one can never write outside the dominating discourse, Godiwala demonstrates how the five chosen feminist playwrights have managed to transform the patriarchal dramatic discourse from within, thus intervening in the mainstream theatre as "the last site of negotiation" (xiii) that feminism had to enter in the second half of the twentieth century.¹ At one level she hence offers an analysis of the changes within dramatic discourse, on another level she undertakes a theoretical critique of Western patriarchy. Assuming an unbroken episteme of patriarchy, which as only in the twentieth century been ruptured by feminism, Godiwala contests Michel Foucault's analysis of epistemological breaks within Western discourse as developed in *The Order of Things*.

2 In Chapter One Godiwala defines her concept of patriarchy as "a complex, interactive web of intermingling or disparate and discrete discursive and post-discursive cultural practices, techniques, and methods" (3). The "rules" that shape discourse and exist on a pre-discursive level according to Godiwala can be called the "western patriarchal impulse," a level that can be modified but nonetheless remains self-reproducing. She chooses *Top Girls* as a play that documents the unbroken historical and global (consider Lady Nijo) episteme characterised by the patriarchal impulse, as the piece gathers female figures from the ninth (Pope Joan) to the twentieth century (Marlene) who have all been exploited and restricted by patriarchy. Godiwala argues that the patriarchal discourse has been ruptured, and thus partly transformed, by feminism (which for example enabled Margaret Thatcher to become Prime Minister in 1979). The changes in the dramatic discourse, which is presented as a subcategory of patriarchal discourse, do not only embrace the playwrights' gender and the subject matters of the plays, but also their form. With reference to Churchill's *Blue Heart* (*Heart's Desire* and *Blue Kettle*) Godiwala demonstrates how far a postmodern feminist play can differ from naturalist patriarchal form.

¹ Godiwala claims that the *fin de siècle* suffragette dramatists have not in fact entered the dramatic discourse as their plays were understood as political pamphlets rather than dramatic achievements (cf. xiii).

3 According to her notion of "the performativity of the dramatic text," Godiwala decides not to refer to particular productions of the chosen plays but rather to read the play texts as eliciting the performance texts, as "acts of performativity on the page" (xviii). Imagining possible performances instead of narrowing her investigation down to one particular/the original production, Godiwala also hopes that her "deep readings" of the plays might inspire future productions. However, with a few considerable exceptions (see below), Godiwala seldom considers performance possibilities in the course of her enlightening textual analysis; especially in the reading of the gender-bending Queen Christina an elaboration on the presentation of gender ambivalence on stage would have been interesting.

4 In Chapter Two Godiwala shows in detailed analysis how Caryl Churchill, the most prominent of the five chosen writers, breaks the bounds of both dramatic form and traditional content by creating innovative, non-patriarchal dramatic modes (for example in *The Skriker*, *Traps*, *Cloud Nine* and *Blue Heart*) and entering previously male territory when examining politics, history, financial issues, and war (such as in *Mad Forest*, *Serious Money*, *Owners*, *Light Shining in Buckinghamshire* and *Top Girls*). In the case of *Vinegar Tom* her feminist concern resulted in a collaboration with *Monstrous Regiment*, a work that according to Godiwala sharpened both her dramatic and her political sensitivity. Godiwala shows that the common attribute "Thatcherite" to those recurrent female figures in Churchill's work who adapt to male ideals is a misnomer. She sees the patriarchal impulse behind this attempt to assimilate ambitious women into the patriarchal system and eventually use them as weapons against feminism (as in the case of Thatcher). There is another common error in the criticism of Churchill's oeuvre that Godiwala reveals: She argues that *Cloud Nine* is a play dealing with gender and sexuality rather than a postcolonial play as commonly assumed. It precariously has the only black character played by a white actor in the first part and completely loses interest in issues of race in the second part:

Churchill does break the bounds of gender but at the cost of other issues with which the English stage has a great difficulty in dealing: the issues of race and colonial relations [...] *Cloud Nine* for all its revolutionary fervour in the domain of feminist subversion and western sexual liberation remains an imperial narrative as it en-acts a progress achieved by a 'civilization' which is not merely White but also English (43-51).

5 It is in her reading of *Top Girls* that Godiwala raises an idea that might indeed be picked up by future productions: She highlights that the seventh woman, the waitress, remains silent and suggests that her subaltern presence should be embodied by a black actress, thus revealing the comparatively privileged status of the other women within the play. Churchill's

neglect of issues of race within her feminist play points towards the importance of locating difference within the current feminist epistemological project. Godiwala's short examination of Jackie Kay's semi-Brechtian *Chiaroscuro* shows that plays produced in the British fringe theatre have raised the issue of race (and black lesbianism) since the 1980s.

6 The third chapter "White Women's Mythologies" shows how Pam Gems puts female characters centre stage, re-working and re-considering famous female (and more recently, also male) icons who have achieved a mythical status, such as Queen Christina of Sweden, Marlene Dietrich, and Edith Piaf. Her non-linear narratives in a Barthesian way de-construct the legends and explore their relations to contemporary women concerning social and sexual freedom and gender restrictions. Similar to Churchill, Gems' project partly is *her* historicising male-dominated myths. Godiwala argues that the plays reflect Gems' non-separationist integrated approach to gender and her belief in a bi-sexuality in which both genders can merge and contribute and that it might be due to her avoidance of polemic writing that Gems is the only woman dramatist to have been produced by the Royal Shakespeare Company five times. In *Queen Christina* Godiwala detects a consideration of the current "gender trouble", as the play portrays the "flux, uncertainty and instability which surrounds gender identity" (91) today and thus can be linked to Judith Butler's notion of gender as citational performativity. Deconstructing the myth of a glamorous, intellectual Queen Christina as established by the film version starring Greta Garbo, Gems depicts a conflictual, deformed, gender-transgressive, "matrophobic" bisexual. Not only female rulers, but also mythic courtesans (Camille), hetairas (Piaf), and whores (Stas) are re-considered by Gems, de-mythicising romance as a construct that masks the exploitative nature of traditional heterosexuality in *Camille* and showing backstage crudity, class rage, and drug addiction in *Piaf*.

7 Entitled "From Heteronormativity to the View From Lesbos", the fourth chapter of *Breaking the Bounds* points out that Sarah Daniels is an ambivalent figure - seen from the radical lesbian margins of dramatic discourse (such as *The Gay Sweatshop* and *Split Britches*) she is an assimilationist, having entered the "malestream" and using traditional dramatic forms such as melodrama to entertain middle-class audiences. Seen from within the mainstream, however, she clearly is the most controversial and radical of the discussed playwrights, as she constantly (and didactically) picks up taboo topics such as pornography (*Masterpieces*), sexual child abuse, incest and mental disease (*Beside Herself*, *The Madness of Esme and Shaz*), and gay lives (*Neaptide*, *Ripen Our Darkness*). Daniels continuously attacks patriarchal society without suggesting that lesbianism is "the solution" to the manifold problems of women. Godiwala convincingly argues that in Daniels' work "lesbian" becomes a

trope for bonding likened to motherhood and sisterhood, a trope for woman's awareness of the oppressiveness of patriarchy, and "a trope of reassurance which says there *are* alternative ways to live" (121). The study shows that melodrama is a dramatic form singularly suited to lesbian dramaturgy, making use of its basic emotions despair, protest, and triumph (for the marginalised) and that Daniels adds her genius of humour to this triad.

8 The final chapter "Soliloquizing Woman" analyses the work of Clare McIntyre and Anne Devlin who both use soliloquies to explore the psyche of the female subject. McIntyre fragments the female subject's social self in *My Heart's A Suitcase* and her sexual self in *Low Level Panic*, dividing woman's responses to her objectification in patriarchal culture among three characters who embody acceptance, assimilation, and rejection. Anne Devlin's psychological portraits of women are set against the backdrop of the Northern Irish conflicts, investigating the patriarchal power in Ireland and its interrelation to the Catholic Church. Devlin shows the women's need for freedom from the social/religious framework of domination, deconstructs the mythology of male heroism in Northern Ireland, and shows the damaging effects of exile.

9 Godiwala's study not only provides an illuminating analysis of the work of five contemporary feminist dramatists but also convincingly traces their influences on the dramatic mainstream discourse. Although some of the writers such as Sarah Daniels ultimately appeared to be a too radical force to continue being produced in the mainstream (Daniels now writes for television), there have been decisive changes to both the topics and the style of mainstream theatre within the past twenty years. It is one of the merits of *Breaking the Bounds* that Godiwala also reveals the shortcomings of feminist dramatic writing. Her constant examination of the depiction, or rather the ignorance, of the issues of race and colonialism points to the importance of including these issues within the mainstream - an inclusion that seems to take place at the turn to the twenty-first century, as recent productions for example at the Royal Court (cf. my review of *Fallout*) and the National Theatre show.

Butoh and Transcending the Identity of Sex. Towards a "tantric" interpretation of Sankai Juku's *Kagemi*

By ajaykumar, Goldsmiths College, University of London, England

1 *Kagemi* by the Japanese Butoh company Sankai Juku was originally created for and at the Théâtre de la Ville, Paris. The production is currently touring internationally. I saw it in London at the major dance venue, Sadlers Wells. The Theatre's Press Release describes the performance (10-14 June, 2003) as one which "explores the other world reflected by the mirror image" (Sadlers Wells, 2003). The noun "Kagemi" is thought by the company's Artistic Director Ushio Amagatsu to be the original Japanese word for mirror. In *Kagemi*'s seven scenes water, wind, dance, echo, dark, light, abundance and emptiness blend into a beguiling stage composition. The dance floor is an imaginary pool into which Amagatsu gazes at imaginary reflections. There are moments when the stance of the dancers suggests mirror images. Above the dancers as they negotiate the stage, is a bed of "floating" (in/on air) lotus plants. In the ultimate sequence of the work, the male dancers perform gestures of prayer and supplication followed by the lowering of the lotus flowers to engulf and "drown" them. Finally their hands emerge, like plants, through the jungle of lotuses, as if lotus stems and possibly flowers themselves. I will return to the central significance of this final image with regard to gender later on in this article. Phytomorphic representations of the divine also are rich in diverse examples and often enigmatic. Holy plants and plants considered to be divine are represented in connection with notions of god/goddess in human form.

2 A common feature of Butoh that involved the creation of highly personal dances, of a notion of relationship between the Body and the Universe. This was predicated by a harmonisation of male-female energies in both male and female performers. The focus of this article is a particular trans-cultural interpretation of this notion of harmonisation and notions of "female" and "feminine" with regard to Butoh, as exemplified by this particular production.

3 Sankai Juku is perhaps the most high profile company that have emerged from the Japanese dance form known as Butoh. Butoh was originally termed *Ankoku Butoh* - meaning the dance of utter darkness. The principal pioneers were Tatsumi Hijikata - who actually gave the form its name - and Kazuo Ohno. Hijikata believed that Butoh was not possible to comprehensively define because it was in a process of inherently re-defining itself. For Hijikata, the practice of Butoh was an ongoing process that could never be complete or attained. So what we have is in fact an emphasis on process, on journey, rather than on form.

4 If one cannot define Butoh one can certainly discern some features that to a greater and lesser degrees are manifest in works which may be termed Butoh. First of all in Butoh the body has been the site for exploration. The body that Hijikata looked for was a Japanese body and the bodies that became his muses were marginal bodies in Japanese society: prostitutes, beggars, invalids and those who shared with him the rural poverty of Tohoku, the region of the north-east of Japan from whence he came. Historically this region functioned as a supplier to the metropolis a purveyor of rice, horses for war, and women for brothels. Indeed Hijikata stated that one of his elder sisters- was sold into prostitution before the Second World War, to enable the family's survival.

5 Hijikata and Ohno rejected existing Japanese vocabularies of movement such as Noh and Kabuki, searching instead for influence by more primitive expression, inspired in part by shamanistic practice, and Japanese culturo-aesthetics relating to metaphysical space and nature. Historically Japanese shamans - *mikos* - have been and still are female.

6 Butoh, despite rejecting classical theatrical forms, represented a search for an authentic Japanese art form in the midst of the country's Westernisation, a process that accelerated after Japan's defeat in the Second World War. Butoh was conceived in the cauldron of Japan's rapid post-war economic expansion and modernisation that led to immense social and cultural upheavals. Hijikata not only rejected Noh and Kabuki but also eschewed Western traditions - as above classical ballet, a form which he believed was inappropriate to the Japanese body. Hijikata described the Japanese physique as having shorter and bandier legs, more appropriate to an emphasis on being grounded rather than on "flight." (This idea was echoed by the theatrical explorations of Tadashi Suzuki, beginning a generation later in the 1960s as part of what became known as the "little theatre movement." Little theatre was a reaction to the Western orientated Shingeki [trans. "new theatre"]: a form of theatre that emerged out of Japan's post-Meiji Restoration Westernisation in the late nineteenth century. Suzuki and others searched for a contemporary theatre in Japan that was both radical and "authentic." He, unlike the Butoh pioneers, more explicitly drew on classical Japanese theatre to create a new vocabulary of movement. Ironically this Suzuki "method" is now being exported around the world as contemporary theatre training for the actor [Suzuki 1986].)

7 A number of Western observers have emphasised that Butoh emerged in relation to and as part of a "post-Hiroshima angst." Journalistic reviews invariably begin with this kind of comment (see Manuelli 16). It is certainly true that Hiroshima has made and still has a deep impact on Japanese people. Many Japanese still maintain very strong feelings of injustice

about the dropping of the atom bombs. However the conception and emergence of Butoh is a more complex matter. It involves discussion of historic aesthetic paradigms that have influenced Japanese art. One must furthermore consider the history of Japan from the late nineteenth century where we observe a substantial adoption of European and American ideas as well as the aforementioned post-Second World War reaction to that Westernisation in certain quarters of Japanese society with a consequent new search for authentic Japanese approaches to all art forms and disciplines. To complicate matters specific to Butoh, Hijikata and Ohno were strongly influenced by the ideas of certain European artists such as Genet, Rimbaud, Artaud, and movements such as German Expressionism. Finally one must be aware of a wider social process where Japanese have taken ideas from other societies and cultures and evolved them and synthesised them into specific authentic Japanese forms.

8 Butoh then embodies a specifically Japanese aesthetic, challenging both Western and Japanese classical ideas of beauty and transcending traditional issues of gender in dance. In Kabuki theatre there exist the *onnagata*, men who impersonate women. In the Noh theatre, men also play women. However in neither is the specific aim to develop a harmonisation of the male and female principle. Furthermore such a notion, in combination with other Butoh elements, was perceived to be far more subversive in Japan than Kabuki, which had now become high art. Ironically Butoh in this respect mirrors the subversive aspects of the original Kabuki from the seventeenth century, originated by a priestess named Okuni.

9 In one interview Ushio Amagatsu expressed the idea that in his work he tries to transcend the identity of sex:

There is a fish which is born male, experiences the degeneration of its male organs and ends life transformed into female. This displays the primordial formation of male/female as a whole... During its life, this fish experiences both male and female existences ... it contains the origin of Mankind, when the fish first appeared to inhabit the earth. (*Dagens Nyheter*)

10 Kazuo Ohno and Tatsumi Hijikata, the pioneers of Butoh - the performance form from which Sankai Juku's work originates - danced in female costumes, "not as female impersonators, but to release their feminine side." (Fraleigh 95). Sankai Juku invariably wear costumes that resemble women's dresses in each of their works. *Kagemi* is no exception. This combined with their shaven heads and bodies coated in white make-up, serves to neutralise gender and androgynise their presence on the stage.

11 According to Johannes Bergmark, "the confusion between the attributes of the two sexes is something that almost only Butoh, except for night-club dancers, have taken out from the taboos of the respectable society citizen" (1). Although Butoh has certainly attempted to

do this, the comment is somewhat misleading as historically there are other examples.

12 Japan, China and India are countries linked by the origination and dissemination of Buddhist practice. Buddhism directly or indirectly has had profound influences on these societies and cultures. In Japan there is the notion of *inyodo* or the way of interaction of male and female. This corresponds to a Chinese Taoist concept of *yin-yang*. In India the notion of male and female, although found in both Buddhism and Hinduism, is central to the way of Tantra, a practice or way of being that predates both Buddhism and Hinduism and yet permeates both these ontological systems in different ways.

13 Tantra is not essentially a religion, nor a way of thought: what exists in words and images serves primarily as a means to action. Tantra is rooted in a holistic body. Essentially each individual must find her or his own way. Tantra is and has been radically subversive of the orthodoxies of South Asian religions; and, more broadly, of South Asian societies and cultures. Here one begins to see a resonance with Butoh. Duality is a starting point of Tantra: a bipolarity in which the two sides are parts of a single whole. Here the duality is a tension between matter/energy and consciousness, between positive and negative poles. Janakananda Saraswati explains that this is symbolically expressed as the union of the *Shiva*, the masculine passive (experiencing) consciousness, with the *Shakti*, the feminine creative (acting) force (Saraswati 20). The *Shakti* or female principle is the body's primal energy or power, the primal mother or "goddess." In contrast to *yin-yang*, Tantra has the masculine energy as the passive and the female energy as the active.

14 Tantrikas (male and/or female followers of Tantra) aim through different methodologies to release and develop this female principle. Butoh artists have incorporated Yoga - which derives from Tantra - into their methodology. Amagatsu's choreography and aesthetic, together with his predecessors, Hijikata and Ohno, and other Butoh artists, appear to incorporate a "tantric" approach to the "female" in their work.

15 In the chapter "My Mother's Face," Sondra Fraleigh eloquently elucidates the personal, cross-cultural and perhaps universality of the "goddess:"

When we transcend our particular existential experience of "mother," the larger feminine principle, also called the Goddess, can begin to teach us. From Tara in Tibet to Isis in Egypt, she has many names. The metaphysics of the Goddess... is symbolic of qualities associated with the mythic feminine, wherever it manifests in women and men. In principle, our higher experience of mother is not existential - fraught with fearful possessiveness, worry and guilt - but metaphysical: that is full of grace [...] Kazuo Ohno [...] emphasises a yin/yang perspective akin to that of Jung, teaching that each person contains the mother and the father, being born of both [...] The earthy soft aesthetic of Butoh makes conscious use of the mythopoetic mother principle [...] Butoh is an attempt to reclaim earthy, dark and often bucolic values as they are

quickly receding in industrialised post-war Japan and threatened around the world in the destruction of nature. (90-95)

16 Bullough and Bullough's study on cross-dressing further substantiates the cross-cultural and trans-historical nature of revealing the feminine. Referring to Hinduism they explain that a man was a man only because of the excess of the principle of masculinity, while a woman had an excess of femininity (Bullough and Bullough 7).

17 Bullough and Bullough further explain the subversive aspect of Tantra: Tantric cults are antinomian... Hindu tantrics (sic) believe that the goddess Sakti, (also known as Shakti) is particularly gratified by prohibited and reprehensible acts that either ignore or transgress the established laws of society, morality and religion; a key teaching is that spiritual union with the god can be best attained through sexual union in the flesh. (8)

18 There is a correspondence with the origins of Butoh here. Tatsumi Hijikata's first work *Kinjiki* ("Forbidden Colours"), inspired by Mishima's work of the same name, was a highly subversive work in terms of both the Japanese dance world and of wider society. This work was according to Lizzie Slater "a violent spasm of antdance: a young man clutches a live chicken between his thighs, in the midst of a brutalising act of buggery" (Stein 107-125). *Kinjiki* caused a scandal: some walked out, others fainted, and in one fell swoop the Japanese Dance world was split. Butoh was violently born. It has been until recently, substantially ostracised by the Establishment and the mainstream and remained very much an underground movement in the 1960s and 1970s.

19 In the first paragraph, I mentioned the play of light and dark in *Kagemi*. Amagatsu states: "I don't think how to light the stage but how to create darkness" (*Independent* 25). Darkness and shadow, as Tanizaki elucidates (*Shadows*), have been significant features in Japanese art and culture. Initial meanings of *yin* and *yang*, derived from Chinese astronomy, was moon and sun; or the shady and sunny sides of a mountain. The concept of *yin-yang* came into being to represent cyclic patterns. Wang Ch'ung stated that "the *yang* having reached its climax retreats in favour of the *yin*; the *yin* having reached its climax retreats in favour of the *yang*" (Wang 7). This corresponds with the kinetic relationship of sun and moon with the earth. Chinese astronomers charted this movement and from this chart came the well-known sign of *yin-yang*.

20 The descent of the lotus plants in the penultimate sequence of *Kagemi* to "drown" the performers thus has a critical significance in terms of an understanding of Amagatsu's avowed concern with the male and female principle in his work, and its correspondence with Tantra that I have attempted to outline. More than one hundred species of lotus plants are found in

temperate zones in America, Europe, Africa and Asia. The lotus flower is an ubiquitous icon in South, South-east and East Asia. Moreover it is also prevalent in ancient Egyptian, Phoenician and Assyrian cultures. In addition to artistic uses, the lotus, since ancient times, has symbolized fertility and related ideas, including birth, purity, sexuality, rebirth of the dead, and, in astrology, the rising sun. In Homer's *Odyssey*, Odysseus lands on the island of the Lotus Eaters. Eating the lotus plant made his men forget everything and exist in bliss: perhaps an interpretation of re-birth, or of renewal, or of a kind of enlightenment. In Buddhism amongst other things it is used to symbolise both enlightenment, and the importance of the mundane realm of our daily lives. Enlightenment is to be found in commonplace. The lotus plant is found to grow most verdantly in murky, muddy swamps, its roots sunk in the detritus below it. In Japanese Buddhism there is the term *Bonno soku Bodai* that means "earthly desires equal enlightenment." The earthly desires are symbolised by the muddy swamp. The lotus flower emerging from the plant symbolises enlightenment. Tatsumi Hijikata seditiously wrote: "I am very aware that my Butoh originates somewhere totally different from the performing arts, related to Buddhism, Shinto, or whatever, I was born from the mud" (Hijikata 4).

21 The Lotus flower is also a significant female icon in Tantra. As Philip Rawson notes: "It (Tantra) uses many female icons, including lotus-flowers" (Rawson 16) in order to focus tantrikas' "attention on the female as the best meditation on the female as the most direct approach to the intuition of truth" (16). If there is anything universal about Amagatsu's work - as exemplified by this production - it certainly lies in the importance of an ongoing and profound investigation of the female principle. The sublime image at the end of this production, with white limbs of the dancers reaching out of a forest of giant lotus plants, superseding the image of a literal lotus flower, can be interpreted, if one deduces the lotus plant being the male and the lotus flower being the female principle, as a "transcended gendered" hand appearing, flower-like, through the forest of plants, epitomising the sublimation of male principle and the blossoming of the female. Furthermore Amagatsu's work could be interpreted as synthesising a number of concepts: the relationship between the human being and nature pertinent to a "post-humanist" society (subject for a further article); the disruption of conventional perceptions of gender; and the ongoing subversion of Butoh, even with itself.

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Is She Not He Or He Not She?

By Agata Maslowska, Jagiellonian University of Cracow, Poland

1 Mark Rylance, Artistic Director of the Globe Theatre, explains this year's Season of Regime Change as focusing on plays by Shakespeare and Marlowe which "explore power and change on three levels: in our states, in our marriages, and in our relationship to the divine." To these notions I would like to add gender relations, as the issues mentioned are highlighted in different productions precisely through an illuminating use of notions of femininity and masculinity. This seems to be most conspicuous in the Globe productions of Shakespeare's *Richard II* and *Richard III*, the first staged by the Globe's Men's Company, the latter presented by the Women's Company (introduced on the Globe's stage for the first time).

2 The production of *Richard II* (1595) explores the possible ways and patterns of staging the Shakespearean play in the original Globe. Thus, the spectators are given the opportunity to actually see how English Renaissance theatre could have worked during the playwright's lifetime, including the meticulously recreated 16th century costumes and music that accompanies the actors on the stage. Naturally, such a production involves an all-male cast playing both female and male parts.

3 The play clearly deals with gender issues, focusing on notions of masculinity by probing into implications of power and heroism. Women are marginalized throughout the play. Moreover, all three female characters, Queen Isabel (Michael Brown), the Duchess of York (Peter Shorey), and the Duchess of Gloucester (William Osborne), seem to represent conventional roles of femininity, namely the loving wife, the protective mother, and the sorrowful widow. Queen Isabel's major scene is set in a garden (associated with notions of nature and nurture) where she whiles away her time grieving her husband, being excluded from the world of power and history. However, although her character has none of the transgressive power of other Shakespearean women, actor Michael Brown presents her without pretensions of feminine softness or fragility. On the contrary, he throughout retains a masculine posture and voice. Contrarily, Mark Rylance in the lead role interprets his Richard II as a mild character associated with feminine allure. The relationship between King and Queen thus seems to be marked by a significant gender crossing, questioning received notions of gender identity.

4 Mark Rylance's *Richard II* is presented far from being an embodiment of masculinity. Significantly, however, the emphasis of the production is not on Richard as a poor leader, but rather on Richard as a human being. Mark Rylance makes Richard's life-story heart-rending

for the audience. He appears far too mild and self-doubting to bear the heaviness of the crown. His private body seems to be at odds with the "body politic" divinely ascribed to him. In this sense, he is placed outside the world of male-defined power. This becomes most apparent when he is dethroned. Speaking with a gentle trembling voice, Richard II is clearly meant to be associated with the feminine, especially in contrast to female characters enacted in ways linked to notions of the masculine. Rylance presents Richard as incapable of facing and fighting the unwritten law of male-defined power exercised through physical violence and heartless rule, his words crumbling under the burden. It is not until the murder scene that he attempts in vain to defend himself by means of non-verbal physical struggle. We pity him after his death, realising that his death is due to his incapability to live up to the role of the powerful, severe male ruler.

5 In contrast, the all-female production of *Richard III* (1597) casts a different light on the link between gender and power issues. Here, English Renaissance convention is inverted, as we are presented with an all-female cast, which at times seems even more convincing than the all-male production at the Globe. The success of the all-female production is, above all, the result of splendid acting, especially on the part of the title hero. The vicious and bloodthirsty Richard III is acted superbly by Kathryn Hunter. For almost three hours, the audience experiences the breathtaking transformation of the actress, her body bent in a crooked pose, her gestures, her facial expression and her voice into the sarcastic, megalomaniac and flirty Richard III in all his fascination, repulsiveness and devilishness. These aspects are convincingly played out in the seduction scenes, when Hunter focuses on Richard as the invincibly powerful malevolent male. All the other actresses playing the male parts are equally strong and convincing in their display of "masculine" nobility, such as Buckingham (Amanda Harris) and Richmond (Louise Bush). Obviously, there are two "minor" characters whom one cannot omit, namely the two Princes of Wales hilariously and also tragically played by Laura Rogers and Liza Hayden. Significantly, none of the actresses attempt to emulate stereotypical notions of masculine movement, posture, or pitch of voice. They can do without this and still be convincing as kings, lords, dukes or princes.

6 At the same time, if we look closer at the female characters in *Richard III*, with strongly powdered and rouged faces, we immediately notice that women in this play are portrayed not only as disempowered and more distanced from the audience than the male roles (above all Richard himself), but also as highly artificial. All the female characters are highborn English women, and the role given to them within their society (a woman as a property acquired by a noble male figure) is exhibited in their acting. Thus there are no

crucial differences between the women but for the moments when they exercise their limited power by means of witchcraft. Yet, even when women try to use witchcraft against the murderous male devil, they are still denied individuality. Thus, this all-female production achieves many things at the same time: It foregrounds that in the world portrayed femininity is merely enactment, a social role ascribed, while focusing on the powerful potential of women, and questioning our preconceived gender-notions.

7 This complex strategy is reinforced by its mixing of the comic and the tragic, distancing the audience as well as drawing it into events. The audience's engagement and active participation is particularly well enhanced through strategies of direct interaction, realised most impressively in the coronation scene, when Amanda Harris as Buckingham encourages the "public" to plead with Richard to take the crown and save the "poor mob" dispossessed of the leader.

8 Summing up, both productions are successful and iridescent with meaning as far as the question of gender is concerned. Both plays expose notions of masculinity, and probe into questions of dichotomous gender constructions. And both productions show how historical changes - and continuities - with regard to gender issues can be used in creative productions for the present.

Gender and Race Debat(tl)ed on the London Stage

By Tina Wald, University of Cologne, Germany

1 Within a week, two new plays opened at the Royal Court Theatre in London that are both plot-based and dedicated to naturalism, if not social realism. Whereas Mick Mahoney's *Food Chain* on the Jerwood Theatre Upstairs investigates family values and materialism, Roy Williams' *Fallout* at the main stage downstairs centres on the investigation of a murder on the streets of London's black neighbourhood. The play deals with questions of race, deprivation, sexual and social rivalry, and street loyalty.

2 As in his last play at the Royal Court, *Clubland* (presented in the smaller venue upstairs), Williams depicts the difficult transition from adolescence to adulthood and the need to take on (self-)responsibility. After the young, ambitious black pupil was killed by the boy-gang around Emile and Dwayne, the lads have to come to terms with their deed and the circumstances and mechanisms that led to it. The questions and accusations of the black D.C. Joe Stephens, who returns to his old neighbourhood to investigate the case, reinforce the lads' unease with their past deed and, above all, with their future prospects. Dwayne's father, a deluded alcoholic who repeatedly crosses the stage begging for money is a constant reminder of how bleak the future for those young boys might be. Individually, all of the boys seem to long for a different life elsewhere, but as soon as they get together, peer pressure makes them celebrate masculine toughness and indifference to any idea of change. The urge to leave a life of random brutality behind is branded as cowardice and a romantic illusion - the reproach "You're too soft" recurs throughout the play. The danger of male softening is (as ever since *Othello*) associated with the intimate and frequent contact with the other sex: Emile is increasingly influenced by his girlfriend Shanice who more quickly than the boys realises the damaging effects and fatal potential of their lifestyle.

3 However, the beautiful Shanice and her girlfriend Ronnie are not merely minor female figures within this male-dominated world. Shanice (played by the riveting Ony Uhiara) quickly becomes the centre of the play - she not only has to deal with the police (Stephens and his white superior Matt) who keep interrogating her about Emile, the main suspect of the murder case, but also with the insecure and tense Emile himself, with his boyfriends who try to "sex her up", and with the jealous outbreaks of the less attractive Ronnie. An impressive scene shows that street violence is not only a phenomenon of masculine street credibility: being teased about her cowardice by Ronnie, Shanice turns to violence and attacks and robs her former (white) teacher. Instead of glamorising violence, Ian Rickson's production clearly

points out the desperation and insecurity that is at the heart of the destructive and boasting behaviour of both the boys and the girls. The play also shows how difficult the communication between the white middle-class authorities (the police and the teacher) and the black street kids remains, as the mutual mistrust is enormous. D.C. Joe Stephens, who has made his way out of the black neighbourhood, is meant to function as a mediator between the worlds. However, the kids accuse him of having changed sides and do not trust him at all, whereas his white colleague suspects him of too much personal involvement. That Stephens indeed begins to over-identify with the murdered bright young Kwame, who was about to leave the quarter, is one of the predictable elements of Williams' story, but the excellent acting of Lennie James makes Stephens' tragic downfall (who is so keen on arresting Emile and the others that he manipulates Ronnie's testimony) nevertheless moving.

4 *Fallout* is part of the current trend of "non-white new writing" that is promoted at the Royal Court and elsewhere, e.g. the NT's current production of *Elmina's Kitchen* by Kwame Kwei-Armah that deals with Hackney's Yardies, Jamaican and West Indian criminal street gangs, and the next play at the RC's main stage, Suzan-Lori Parks' *Topdog/Underdog* that again deals with black male street rivalry. This trend is not least due to the Arts Council's declared interest in promoting and subsidising productions of new writing that deal with ethnic minorities.

5 Ian Rickson's dynamic but nevertheless meticulous direction, the innovative stage design by Ultz that makes the audience sit in the round and partly behind wire fences that protect and separate them from the street gang's basketball games and punch-ups, and the amazing acting make *Fallout* a very enjoyable and at the same time disorientating experience. I left the theatre with the feeling of indeed having seen "a slice of contemporary Britain," as the Court advertises the production.

Goombay Smash

By Jane Eaton Hamilton

The hotel was what your travel agent, a gay man who gave you an itinerary with a sixteen hour lay-over in Toronto, recommended. He showed you an advertisement in *Girlfriends* magazine. Two women sunning in chaise lounges were photographed from the rear; only two tanned, fit arms showed and then, beyond them, the swimming pool, and then, beyond that, some potted palms. It looked like paradise and you were keen to sign up. Now that you're actually here, you know that the resort is barely passable. Your room, billed as poolside but two buildings away from water, is undeniably cramped, with hardly enough space for all your and Marg's luggage, which in very short order open like orifices and ejaculate vibrators and sandals and hemorrhoid cream. Marg photographs this mess. In the window the broken air conditioner burbles; the room is as cold as a refrigerator. You spend your first night in the defrost drawer, huddling against the redoubtable if lovely Marg like a stick of celery. The good part is that, tossed together under the covers, you and she make love, and if there's a little something missing after five years together, at least she's having sex with you, not someone else.

The morning stretches out leisurely. There is a breakfast of sorts served in the dining room, with coffee, orange juice, toast and cereal. As promised in the glossy brochure, there are plenty of women. Only women, in fact, and they mostly they come in twos, like Arc animals. You and Marg take your plates to the courtyard and sit in partial shade at a white resin table. "Hey, Marg," you say and when she looks up at you, her startling eyes limpid and bored, you send her the visual equivalent of an elbow in her side. You want her to look at all the sets of twins. For instance, the two women who wear the same white serge baseball shirts, with black trim that says Key West as if it's a team. The women are young, probably in their mid-twenties. You can't for the life of you imagine what they do when they aren't busy with a tropical vacation: are they accountants? historians? This hotel, for all its inadequacies, doesn't come cheap. They have identical blond hair, spiky on top but roping between their shoulder blades in back. Are they perhaps actual twins? No, they smooch. They look longingly across their table at each other and rise to plant wet kisses on each other's lips.

It would be like kissing yourself, you think, and think about how many nights you've been left to do just that.

There is another couple who wear identically styled hair blown poufily back. One is

streaked blond and the other is brunette, but that's not what you notice. What you notice is the sameness, and their similar thin lips. When they depart, going off to do you don't know what with their day in paradise, another couple takes their spot. Though different in build, both of these women have masses of curly black hair cascading to their waists.

Maybe this is how American lesbians celebrate their anniversaries, you think. Never mind paper, silver, gold: American lesbians have hair anniversaries. If they make it two years, they part on the same side, five years they spike, ten and they bob. Twenty and they both wear buns in snoods.

"Psst," you say, "Marg. Look over there."

Marg says, "What, Joyce?" and looks up at you a little annoyed.

You point out the women with waterfall hair and try and explain about anniversaries, and how the two of you should get matching buzz cuts, but Marg just frowns and goes back to scraping out her grapefruit with a stumpy handled spoon.

You hope if you live to be ninety, you never look like anyone's clone. Unless it's Marg's. You would be Marg's clone if she asked. You would - if she asked.

You picked up a car in Miami and when you called your mother to say you were a bit hesitant about renting at the airport because of all the violence towards tourists, she said, "Don't be silly. They only kill Germans." Canadian, you drove down the southern seaboard through the linked group of southern Florida islands called the Keys. Because it is late October, every home or business you passed, just about, was decorated. Americans take their Hallowe'en seriously. In Vancouver, where you live, Hallowe'en is reserved for the few days immediately preceding the end of the month: a simply carved pumpkin on the doorstep, a demure bowl of candy in the foyer. But in Florida porches are massed in white cotton pulled out to resemble spider webs. These are huge, ten or twenty feet across. Black plastic spiders gallumph across the netting. In every second window, convincing fright masks made of rubber are displayed along with white sheeted ghosts or black sheeted witches. Maybe it's the tropics. Everything here is ripe and half rotten, even holidays. Even girlfriends.

Ways you have debased yourself for her:

1) you have danced naked to girl group songs in your kitchen trying to amuse her. *Stop in the Name of Love (before you break my heart)*

2) you have lain nude on your car, a gigantic hood ornament, in your garage that smells of dirty oil, waiting for her to raise the door with her remote

3) you have not complained when she called you jealous, a shrew, unbalanced, even if your friends were present

There is something disorienting about breakfast. For one thing, you are smack dab in the middle of a bunch of vacationing lesbians, which means you ought to feel like a hog in heaven. But you don't. Instead you feel pasty skinned and overweight, as if you carry the heaviness of Canada with you. No one looks at you. No one cruises you. You might as well be a pumpkin.

Vines hang down the sides of the buildings trailing things that look like red licorice ropes. Hibiscus shrubs bloom hot and pink, thrusting up deeply coloured stamens. Everything droops and drips. Oranges plump on leafy stems, shading from green to orange. The hot tub gurgles. Skeletons dangle from some of the palm trees. When you were thinking about taking Marg away somewhere, you researched palm trees and found out there were 3000 varieties. There are probably ten or twenty varieties around this courtyard. You try to dredge up names: coconut, saw cabbage, Royal.

You are almost positive Marg doesn't want to be here with you. She's made it clear. When you said, Let's get away, she said, Who? You and me?

While Marg finishes eating, you go to the office to ask for a room upgrade. You want a suite right beside the pool because, as you tell Camille, you didn't come thousands of miles to stay in a room the size of a closet. "I gave closets up years ago," you say, grinning stupidly. Camille doesn't think it's funny. There is a room you can change to at noon, she says, for an extra \$30 US a night; if you pack, Camille will see that your bags are moved. Even if you get back late, someone will be in the office to exchange keys with you. Camille is a strapping blond who wears a white shirt calculated to set off her dark tan. As far as you can see, there is only one of her. For a minute, you think she likes you. For a minute, you think she's moving your luggage as a favor and won't expect a tip. She asks if you and Marg have signed up for tomorrow's women only sunset champagne cruise. You say, "Should we?" as if Camille will know what's the right move to please Marg, then plunk \$80 US, which works out to something like \$8000 Canadian, on her desk and wait for a receipt.

Marg and you stroll out to discover Key West. You walk south to where a marker tells you you're at the southernmost tip of the continental US. Cuba, it says, is only 90 miles away. You think of the refugees trying to cover the distance by raft; you shake the thought, a responsible, work-a-day concern, away and try to concentrate on paradise. Walk to the water's edge. Point at your chest. Say, "Look, my little mung bean. These are the southernmost boobs

in the continental US."

Marg laughs, and sets up for a photograph - of your breasts - which you consider such a hopeful sign that you mention hair anniversaries again.

You watch pelicans dive bomb for food. You love their greedy pouches and how they skim the surface of the waves looking for fish.

It's hot out so every store becomes a relief, both from the heat and the street vendors. There's merchandise for sale that you'd never find in Vancouver, and lots of art galleries; while Marg leans on a door frame, assuredly bored, you buy three framed prints and arrange to have them shipped home.

On Duval Street, you buy a black ostrich feather, look hard at Marg and say, *For later*. Marg says, *What do you mean?*

Marg wants to tour the Hemingway House. Hemingway was never a favourite writer of yours but because Marg's happiness is paramount, you agree. Also, you see it as a chance to get off your feet, if only for a minute. Key West is supposedly a walker's paradise, but you can attest first hand that touring has hardly been like walking on clouds. Asphalt is asphalt and after a while, the balls of your feet ache no matter how pretty the scenery. And there's been some pretty good scenery. Especially the flora, the wild, untamable growth that loops and spirals through people's yards messy as intestines.

The house is a registered historic landmark. It's big and blocky, painted beige, with wonderful oval windows with green shutters. The grounds are perfect; philodendrons mass and climb banana palms, dangling leaves as big as boogie boards.

And in fact the tour is lovely, too - the house is warm and sweet. You long to reach out and run your fingers across the spines of the books in the many bookshelves, even though you know most of them were probably not Hemingway's. But many of the furnishings are genuine, things Hemingway and his wife Pauline accumulated in Spain, Africa and Cuba. There's a wonderful birthing chair in the master bedroom that belonged to Pauline; Pauline had two kids with Ernest and you wonder if she used the chair. A sign strapped across it says, "Please do not sit." You wonder about being a scofflaw and sitting anyhow. You wonder what you would give birth to.

Hemingway built the first pool in Key West. It is filled and blue and beautiful, much nicer than the chary one at the guesthouse where you're staying. Apparently it about broke Hemingway - even in the late 30s, the cost was \$20,000. That's why he sunk a penny--his last, according to legend - in the wet cement of the patio. Marg makes you stand beside it; she takes a photo of your toe.

Marg says her favourite thing is the catwalk from his second-storey bedroom to his office over the poolhouse.

"Aren't writers romantic?" she asks dreamily. Marg's other woman is a writer, sort of. A poet, sort of. Marg taps the brochure on your arm. "It says he wrote *A Farewell to Arms* and *For Whom the Bell Tolls* here."

Marg once booked you into the Sylvia Beach Hotel in Newport, Oregon. The only room left was the Hemingway Room, which had a view of the parking lot and an even better view of the Dempsey Dumpster. Worse, it had a moth bitten deer head right above the bed. You dreamed that it fell and one of its antlers gored you through your heart.

One of the many, six-toed cats slinks around your ankles, its malformed paws flattening on the porch boards. The air smells of jasmine.

Mallory Pier: it's where you end up after a long afternoon of walking, staring the sun in its swollen orange eye as it winks into the Caribbean. Night falls, but all around you are hucksters. An acrobat totters across a wire strung fifteen feet above the boardwalk. A sword swallower pushes blades that look black and deadly into his throat. A boy of about fifteen grins while tourists take snaps of the iguana on his shoulder. A bearded man lets his parrot hop on tourists' shoulders then asks for donations. It's busy. It's noisy. It's colourful. It mirrors your mood. All that cacophony, that jostling, that competition for your attention. That's what it's like inside you. There isn't a calm neuron in your entire brain. They're all roused. They're all snapping and popping to the Latin music of the pier. You could burst into dance any second, something as disjointed and arrhythmic as a wooden puppet.

You're almost positive that she gives the other woman things you've given her.

Where is your watch? My watch? The watch I gave you for Christmas.

Where is that ear cuff I gave you? Ear cuff? I don't know. Did you give me an ear cuff?

This has been going on for months. Something has been going on for months. That's why you're here, why you planned this trip - to have Marg all to yourself, to have her undivided attention. At home, Marg is a very busy chef in a very busy restaurant and, as far as you can tell, also a very busy lover - although not in your bedroom.

At home, you have taken to watching the Discovery Channel while you wait up for

Marg. Recently, they had a week's special on sharks. Sharks, researchers contend, are as intriguing as whales and dolphins. But after watching eight specials, you don't agree. You don't see anything interesting about sharks. Not great whites, not whale sharks, not hammerheads. They don't vocalize. They don't breach. They don't even breathe air. They're fish, not mammals, and that's what the researchers seemed to forget. The only thing that intrigued you, especially considering the upcoming trip to Key West, was an aerial shot of a man and a woman standing in water just thigh high. Dotted around them, each within fifty yards, were seven great white sharks. According to the TV, the ocean is like that all the time; the announcer offers up the image to prove that sharks only rarely attack humans. They would only like you kicking on a surf board so that, from underneath, in their stupid, subterranean brains, you looked like a sea lion. You and Marg together - twin sea lions, with twin hairdos.

You and Marg recently bought a house together. Naively, you assumed this meant that the two of you were seriously committed. Because as a teacher you have summers off, you started to putty and scrape, mostly alone, in July. In early August, when you moved your bed to start painting the walls in there, a note fluttered to the floor from under Marg's pillow: *What am I doing?* it asked. *She's young enough to be my daughter.*

Although you are not personally that young, you know who is. Her name is Emma. She's the new sous chef at Marg's restaurant. She is young, skinny and married. She dresses in black. Marg brings home her poetry printed in zines which she leaves on the kitchen counter. When you get back to the guesthouse, your belongings have appeared miraculously in the "suite" beside the pool. At this guesthouse, where the rooms are the size of closets, the suites are the size of rooms. As far as you can tell, they are only called suites because of the sugar in a candy dish on the bedside table. Some women are having a party just outside your window; you and Marg decide to try the jacuzzi in the other courtyard, which is abandoned. But someone has sprinkled soap into it and when you turn on the jets, it begins to foam. At first it is hard to see the bubbles; in the dark night they make only the ghostliest, Hallowe'en outline, but after a while, the bubbles begin to pop against the bottom of your chins, against your lower lips, against your noses. When Marg inhales one she says, "Oh, for pity's sake. I think we should call it a night." You swat bubbles away, cupping them like breasts. You step from the tub after Marg, spilling suds, and pull a towel around yourself while Marg sets up a tripod. The empty burbling hot tub is caught forever on Kodachrome. You tiptoe through the breakfast room. You half hope the partying women will ask you to join them. You wonder if there is something identifiably Canadian about you that causes them not to. Perhaps your pasty skin reminds them of snow. Perhaps they understand that you are the kind of woman

upon whom your lover would cheat.

You crawl into bed beside Marg. You want to be held in her arms, but she has her shin in her hand. She is dotting After Bite where the mosquitoes have got her. Into her leg she says, "First there was nothing, and then there was *A Farewell to Arms*. I'm still trying to get over it."

The women outside hoot and holler. You lean across Marg and empty the candy dish into your palm. You wonder who has stayed in this bed before you, whether they number in the dozens or hundreds, whether they've left pieces of themselves behind in the form of stray hairs or dandruff or stains, whether they were new lovers or old, whether any of them fought. You are not fighting with Marg, of course, and that has to count for something. It is not exactly a honeymoon between you, but not fighting has to count for something. You think about Key West's narrow streets, the small salt box houses, their gingerbread trim.

You lie in bed listening to the party from which you are excluded. Marg puts down her After Bite and sighs. "I wish to hell they'd just shut up," she says, and as if in answer, you hear an interruption. Marg slides from bed and reports from the window. "It's the police," she whispers. "They've had a complaint. They're breaking it up."

It is after one when you finally slide into sleep.

You wake groggy, as if you were one of the drunks at the party. The sun bakes at the window. Marg is nowhere to be found. You stumble to the bathroom and remember that today is the day the guesthouse moves you back to your old room with the broken air conditioner. This room is booked. This is also the day of the sunset champagne cruise. Maybe Marg is at breakfast. Yes, yes, she is, scribbling furiously on a bit of paper she balls up and slips too quickly into her pocket. When you ask her what she wrote she says, "Uh. Thoughts for the day? Things we could do." A letter to Emma? you think. You look around you, desperate, as if one of the twin sets could help, could recommend a barber that would put your relationship right. You're aware that people are finally noticing you. But they don't seem very friendly. The twins in the Key West baseball jerseys actually scowl. Marg shrugs. She says, "I get the idea they think we're the ones who reported them."

You know Marg is missing Emma; you wonder if the ache is acute, if she came to breakfast alone because she couldn't stand to be near you another minute. You remember that once upon a time, things were new and fresh between the two of you. Marg's eyes danced the rumba (the "dance of loff") when you came into a room. You aren't hungry. You brave the shattering glances and serve yourself a small bowl of unflavored yogurt. It's sour. It puckers your lips.

After thumbing through tourist brochures, Marg has a plan for the day. She wants to rent scooters.

"Scooters? As in motorcycles?" Perhaps you screech, because three sets of twins turn to give you scathing glances. Has Marg seen how Key West drivers drive? Maybe she wants you to die. Maybe she wants the insurance money so that she can open a restaurant with Emma. Or you'll end up a vegetable and Marg, called upon to nurse you the rest of your natural born days, will smooch a tag team of women while you lie in bed watching, helpless, your back shattered. "I can't ride a motorcycle."

"See?" Marg says and passes you a brochure. She taps it. "They give you lessons on the spot."

That is how the two of you end up scorching through Old Town like Hallowe'en rockets. The scooters aren't so hard to manage, after all, but you'd prefer to stick to the back roads, where it doesn't matter if you give it too much gas and fly. You scooter out through a military base to a public beach. Like twins, you both have on one piece black bathing suits under your pants; you park and hot foot it across the sand to the seaweed ridden shore. The waves are tall; they slap against the beach and sound like Alka Seltzer. Marg insists you have to swim since you're here. Marg insists you can't come all this way and not get in any other water other than a sabotaged jacuzzi. So you run in. The water is surprisingly cold, like Canada's. There's an undertow. Seaweed wraps around your neck. You lie back and before a wave capsizes you, Marg snaps your picture. You are wearing thongs and this is mostly what will show up; two sizable blue floating feet.

Suddenly you scream. Something has brushed against your leg. You spring to your feet. There, undulating in the waves, is an alligator's tail. You scramble to shore. Gradually, the thing washes in. It's severed, about six feet long. The wound is red, ragged and fresh. The tail tapers off to nothing.

"I think it's a snake," Marg says, poking it with the leg of her tripod.

You look at her. "An anaconda," you say. Once, your brother's girlfriend called your brother's penis the anaconda of love. You told her you weren't interested in knowing.

"Go figure," Marg says, and leans in close for a picture. Severed, the tail can't do much. It can't do harm. It can't swim. It can't even scare you.

Marg has another idea. She signals and pulls over the the side of the stumpy road and tells you she wants to visit the graveyard. There's a gravestone she wants to show you.

You ought to have guessed this was coming. In all the places you've vacationed in your years together, Marg has wanted to see the graveyards. You think her interest is macabre. You think there is nothing to learn about the Greek or Indonesian population by looking at what kind of graves they make. Marg disagrees. Marg thinks houses of the dead capture the heartbeat of a nation.

"The dead don't have heartbeats," you mutter as she putters onto the thin, asphalt drive snaking through the cemetery. She leaves a sassy plume of blue exhaust behind her. When you pass a high rise of maybe forty graves, Marg stops. The graves are indented; they look like cubbyholes for school children. The white stone is blackening with age.

Marg peers at you and says, "We should talk. Something's been on my mind." She snaps pictures. Not of you, but of the condo graves. You are busy trying to knock down the kick stand of your scooter so that you can sidle over to the shade. Your flip flop bends. You bruise your toe and curse. You look up at Marg, who has produced a hanky and is swiping at her high cheek bones, her upper lip, the back of her neck.

"About Emma," she says. "You know Emma, that poet where I work?"

You don't know how to respond. Suspicion of Marg's affair is central to who you've become over the last year. You may not like it, but you're used to it. It's become the status quo, and really, you don't want Marg to rock this leaky boat. You don't want Marg to utter another word. But to forestall her, you know you have to say something. 'I love you' is what comes out.

Marg frowns at you, assessing, her eyes harsh and glassy. You stare back at her, a challenge. *Don't*, you think. *Don't say*. Finally Marg makes a noise in her throat and revs the throttle on her scooter. The bike surges forward; it's an instant more before Marg's torso follows.

It's very hot, very close, and the sun is beating down. The grass here is all scrubby, not really what, in Canada, you'd label grass at all. You listen to the surprisingly loud put-put of Marg's scooter fade into the distance before you turn the key on your own and try to catch up.

The grave Marg's been trying to show you has an odd stone. She stops and stabs a finger towards it, wordlessly: *I Told You I Was Sick*, B. P. Roberts, May 17, 1929 to June 18, 1979.

It did not occur to you, when you plunked down your money for the sunset cruise, that mostly what you were paying for was the privilege of drinking as much booze as you could pour down your throat in two hours. You are the next thing to a teetotaller and prone to

seasickness, and while Marg drinks, she won't imbibe enough to make this jaunt cost effective. You would both need to drink two thousand, three hundred and twenty-six margaritas to get back your money. All the twins, with whom you are in close proximity while the sky throws its razzle-dazzle over the horizon, ignore you steadfastly. The baseball twins wear matched purple tank tops with pink triangles in the spot where, ostensibly, their hearts are.

"Come on," says Camille, the women who moved your luggage from room to room for a tip of only \$200 US, the one who talked you into this cruise. "Have a drink. On me." She orders at the bar then passes each of you an orange concoction that looks poisonous as snake venom. Anaconda venom. "Goombay Smashes," she says, smiling, "an island tradition."

Goombay Smash, you think: The definition of a relationship that goes tits-up in the tropics. You look at Marg. It occurs to you - again - how beautiful she is. How alluring. The sky blankets the rocking boat. Obediently, you sip. Marg also sips, thin-lipped sips that quickly lower the froth in her glass.

"So, how long have the two of you been an item?" Camille wants to know, getting Marg a refill.

"Not quite long enough for snoods," you say, making Camille frown. The smash is sickly sweet, grenadine and rum.

"Ignore her," Marg says and leans to touch Camille's fit, tanned leg. "It's best to just ignore Joyce when she gets like this." Marg's hand doesn't move from above Camille's kneecap. The two of them exchange a look until you are forced to think: *Marg and Camille?* You berate yourself, but then Marg takes out her camera, arranges a shot of Camille, and asks you to move out of the way.

While you down your beverage, you stare at a sign advertising an organization called "Reef Relief." Accidental boat groundings damage coral, it says. "Brown, brown, run aground. Blue, blue, sail on through."

Perhaps, you think, this is what Emma is, what Camille could be, skiffs running aground on your sensitive reef, Skidoos slicing the tips of your living heart. You feel a sudden urge. You run to the side of the boat to ralph. Behind you is Marg with her lens pointed at your mouth.

List Of Contributors

Karin Ikas received her Ph.D. at the University of Würzburg, Germany, on July 19, 1999 with a dissertation on "Modern Chicana Literature: An Intercultural Analysis" [German title: "Die zeitgenössische Chicana-Literatur: Eine interkulturelle Untersuchung"]. She is now a postdoctoral fellow and lecturer at the University of Würzburg in the department of Cultures, Languages and Literatures of English Speaking Countries. Her publications include articles on Chicana Literature and an edited collection of Chicano short stories for high-school students. She is author of *Chicana Ways: Conversations with Ten Chicana Writers* (Reno: University of Nevada Press) and co-editor of *Latino Literatures and Cultures: An International Perspective* (together with Professor F. Lomelí, UC Santa Barbara). Her new research projects involve also studies on English language drama in the 19th and 20th century, gender, the experience of war in English Language Literatures and Cultures. Her latest publications include *Stories from Down Under (Australia) and Aotearoa (NZ)* (Munich: Langenscheidt/Longman, 2003), an annotated collection of short stories she co-edited with Professor David Carter from the University of Queensland (Brisbane/Australia).

Walter W. Hölbling is currently chair of the American Studies Department at Karl-Franzens-University in Graz, Austria, where he teaches U. S. literature and culture. Among the books he published and edited are *Fiktionen vom Krieg im neueren amerikanischen Roman* [*Fictions of War in Recent American Novels*] (1987), *Utopian Thought in American Literature* (1988), *The European Emigrant Experience in the U. S. A.* (1992), *U. S. Documentary Films on World War II and Vietnam* (1993). He has also published articles on postmodernist, regional and immigrant writing, literature in the information society, segregationist politics in North Carolina in the reconstruction period, and issues of multi-culturalism and post-colonialism in the contemporary U. S. A. Currently he is preparing a study of Austrian refugee publishers in the U.S.A. and co-editing a critical anthology on concepts of 'nature' in the U.S.A. and another one on contemporary American identity. He also writes verse in English and German and, together with Gabriele Pötscher, has recently published a volume of poetry in English titled *Love Lust Loss*.

Sylvia Vance has taught Modern British Literature, American Literature and Critical Theory at Oxford University. She writes mainly on British women writers of the 1930s, including Virginia Woolf, Storm Jameson, Naomi Mitchison, Rose Macaulay and Katherine Burdekin,

and has forthcoming work on Sylvia Plath. Her current project is on women writers and modernity. She is now at the Department of English, University of Alberta, Canada.

Annedith M. Schneider is an Assistant Professor of Cultural Studies at Sabanci University in Istanbul, Turkey. Her research interests include gender, nationalism and postcolonial literature. She has published articles in the *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, *Cincinnati Romance Review*, *Encyclopedia of Postcolonial Studies* and the volume *Femmes et violence dans le texte maghr,bin* (Harmattan, forthcoming).

Konstanze Kutzbach

Miriam Wallraven

Tina Wald

ajaykumar is a lecturer at Goldsmiths College, University of London. He is also an award-winning and critically acclaimed practitioner. ajaykumar's field of research concerns an interrelation between art and ontology. Specifically he is investigating themes a propos the nature of being sought, based on the concept of dependent origination, within the dynamic interrelation of body-space-nature-art-science-technology. The rock-cut edifices at Ellora and Ajanta, in India, have been a recent focus for such research; as has collaboration with Anna Furse for the production, *Yerma's Eggs*, Riverside Studios, London, and Explore@Bristol, May-June, 2003: an investigation of issues of bio-ethics and infertility via performative and digital media. ajaykumar will be continuing this exploration of the female-male principle in a target article for **Anybody's Concerns II**, the upcoming issue of **gender forum**.

Agata Maslowska

Jane Eaton Hamilton is the author of six books, most recently a collection of short stories, *Hunger*, nominated for the prestigious Ferro-Grumley Award in the US. Her stories have won many awards, including twice the first prize in the Prism International short story contest (Goombay Smash, 1998; Sperm King, 2003). Her stories have appeared in the Journey Prize anthologies, Best Canadian Short Stories, and have been cited as distinguished in Best American Short Stories and the Pushcart Prize. Her work recently appeared in *The Writer's*

Presence 4e (Bedford/St.Martin's) and *The Spirit of Writing* (Penguin Canada). She is working on a novel, *Wild Mare*. Jane has successfully fought for the same-sex marriage in Canada and married her partner Joy Masuhara in June 2003. For further information on the marriage ruling click [here](#). Her website is at <http://www.janeeatonhamilton.com>.