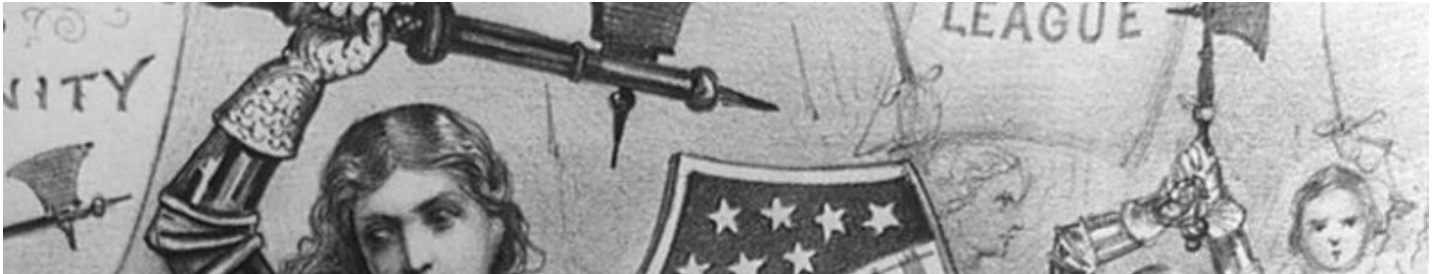


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GENDER FORUM

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Gender Debattled: Gender and War

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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.

Opinions expressed in articles published in *gender forum* are those of individual authors and not necessarily endorsed by the editors of *gender forum*.

Submissions

Target articles should conform to current MLA Style (8th edition) and should be between 5,000 and 8,000 words in length. Please make sure to number your paragraphs and include a bio-blurb and an abstract of roughly 300 words. Files should be sent as email attachments in Word format. Please send your manuscripts to gender-forum@uni-koeln.de.

We always welcome reviews on recent releases in Gender Studies! Submitted reviews should conform to current MLA Style (8th edition), have numbered paragraphs, and should be between 750 and 1,000 words in length. Please note that the reviewed releases ought to be no older than 24 months. In most cases, we are able to secure a review copy for contributors.

Article Publishing

The journal aims to provide rapid publication of research through a continuous publication model. All submissions are subject to peer review. Articles should not be under review by any other journal when submitted to *Gender forum*.

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Detailed Table Of Contents

Karin Ikas: Editorial: Gender Debat tl ed	1
Karin Ikas: "A Message to the Emperor" & "The Battle of the Cradle": Gendered Nationalism and Identity Politics in the Great War	4
Walter W. Höbling: Texans, War Fever, and the Absence of the Female	24
Sylvia Vance: "On the Knife-edge of Time": Katherine Burdekin and Naomi Mitchison	39
Annedith M. Schneider: Building the Nation: Narrating Women and the Algerian War	59
Konstanze Kutzbach (Review): Paulina Palmer: <i>Lesbian Gothic: Transgressive Fictions</i>	69
Miriam Wallraven (Review): Penelope Deutscher: <i>A Politics of Impossible Difference: The Later Work of Luce Irigaray</i>	73
Tina Wald (Review): Dimple Godiwala: <i>Breaking the Bounds. Feminist Dramatists Writing in the Mainstream since c. 1980</i>	79
ajaykumar (Review): Butoh and Transcending the Identity of Sex: Towards a "tantric" interpretation of Sankai Juku's <i>Kagemi</i>	83
Agata Maslowska (Review): Is She Not He Or He Not She?	90
Tina Wald (Review): Gender and Race Debat(tl)ed on the London Stage	93
Jane Eaton Hamilton: Goombay Smash	95
List of Contributors	105

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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