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THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

Women's Fictional Responses to the First World War

A comparative study of selected works by French and German writers

being a Thesis submitted for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in the University of Hull

by

Catherine Mary O'Brien B.A.

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ABBREVIATIONS

List of Abbreviations used for the selected titles:

DO	=	*Die Opferschale* by Ida Boy-Ed
DP	=	*Dans le Puits ou la vie inférieure 1915-1917* by Rachilde
DrM	=	*Das rote Meer* by Clara Viebig
GC	=	*L'Histoire de Gotton Connixloo* by Camille Mayran
K	=	*Der Kriegsfreiwillige* by Helene von Mühlau
KW	=	*Kriegsbriefe der Familie Wimmel* by Margarete Böhme
LHL	=	*Les Heures longues* by Colette
LO	=	*L'Oubliée* by Camille Mayran
PIM	=	*...puis il mourut* by Jeanne Landre
RC	=	*Un Roman civil en 1914* by Lucie Delarue-Mardrus
TdH	=	*Töchter der Hekuba* by Clara Viebig
UH	=	*Die unsere Hoffnung sind* by Helene Christaller
VA	=	*La Veillée des armes* by Marcelle Tinayre

INTRODUCTION

Soldiers' names engraved upon the rolls of honour, embellishing memorials throughout once belligerent nations, support the idea that the First World War was an intrinsically male ordeal; political and military tomes have done little to belie this viewpoint, revealing strategies born of male initiative; and surveys of war literature have traditionally served as bastions of male authorship, revering the works of Owen, Rosenberg, Barbusse, Dorgelès, Zweig, Remarque *et al.* The novels and poems of 1914-18 which have entered the First World War literary canon belong to a male-dominated tradition in which soldiers' perspectives have held the monopoly. Amongst the millions of men who joined the army were thousands of established and potential writers whose testaments offered first-hand knowledge of front-line battle and created 'a link... between war and literature unknown before.'[1] Their written testimonies, scribbled in the trenches or composed in the aftermath of introspection and retrospection, offer visions of the glory and horror of the battlefield which have become the literary patrimony of the Great War.

The depiction of the psychological and emotional dimensions of women's First World War experience has played a lesser - often a non-existent - role in literary studies in the belief that 'the primary loss in war literature is inevitably death; mourning is secondary'.[2] The widows, grieving mothers and broken-hearted fiancées are excluded from the supreme sacrifice of death itself, endowing their personal tragedy with inferior status.

Yet, without the women's frame of reference, an analysis of the legacy of

war remains incomplete, leading to the positing of universal statements in the name of only half the population. It is a factor that has been noted by historians and sociologists, who have begun to redress the imbalance by turning issues of gender and the First World War into a focal point as they have charted the wartime segregation of the sexes and the void behind the lines which women came to fill. Whether 1914-1918 was a watershed in the history of women's liberation, or primarily an occasion for female understudies to revel in a brief moment of glory before returning to the wings, has since been the preoccupation of many historical studies.

Literary critics have, however, lagged behind their historical contemporaries in this field, often retaining androcentric criteria in the selection of texts for analysis and reassessment. This feature is not peculiar to war literature. The 'phenomenon of the transience of female literary fame'[3] has meant that 'each generation of women has found itself, in a sense, without a history, forced to rediscover the past anew, forging again and again the consciousness of their sex.'[4] The [predominantly male] academics who have established the literary canon have neglected to incorporate the work of many women writers, often failing to acknowledge the omission, as if the outcome were the result of obliviousness, rather than of a decision taken on intellectual grounds.

It is not simply that women are dismissed as 'inferior writers'. In his analysis of French literature of the First World War era John Cruickshank advocates the study of authors with 'limited talents', in order to 'catch something of the general atmosphere and flavour of the period', but narrows that range to incorporate only the male sex. 'Flawed immediacy can be more valuable testimony than flawless but detached reconstruction', but only male writers are excused their faults.[5]

It was during the 1980s that a number of Anglo-American academics broke the customary mould by focusing attention on women's contribution to war literature, either as fictional figures within war novels by celebrated male authors, or as the producers of textual meaning. Catherine Reilly's seminal *Scars upon my Heart* brought women's poetry to an audience raised on the verse of Rupert Brooke and Siegfried Sassoon; and Sandra M. Gilbert re-examined gender roles in *Soldier's Heart: Literary Men, Literary Women, and the Great War.*[6] With the re-publication and review of women's war writings in the English language, critics now began to contest the assumption that 'women had nothing to say' about the First World War.[7]

By making a preliminary incursion into this neglected aspect of the war literature of France and Germany, this thesis continues that same process of re-evaluation. Conscious of French and German women's historical role in the war effort but ignorant of their fictional response, I conceived this project under the banner of 'Images of Women' criticism - the first stage of feminist criticism which is the study of male representations of the female sex. Taking canonical First World War novels as my starting point, my intention was to analyse fictional female characters in an exercise which would shift the traditional emphasis, but remain safely rooted in established source material.

The orientation subsequently changed when work undertaken in libraries and archives in Paris and Berlin revealed references to a substantial collection of women's writing about the Great War - in the form of novels, short stories, poetry, autobiographical accounts and propaganda - of which I had previously been unaware. The need to unearth these texts, which offer reflections on women and war which augment the male frame of reference that I had initially adopted, appeared to be of greater urgency than my original proposal. As knowledge of

women's responses will have inevitable repercussions for an analysis of female characters in male literature, either by reaffirming or refuting the conclusions which have been drawn on the basis of evidence provided by one sex, the assessment of this body of work was the first logical step.

As the copiousness of the publications which have come to light exceeds the scope of this thesis, many of the texts can be mentioned only in passing. Literary studies published at the turn of the century testify to the fact that the nineteenth century was notable not only for organized attempts to draw attention to the feminist cause, but also for the rise of the novel as a literary genre favoured by both writers and readers of the female sex. Despite the assessment of George Eliot that 'those [women] who distinguish themselves by literary production, more frequently approach the Gallic than the Teutonic type',[8] the Germans rivalled the French in creating 'a varied female literary continuum'.[9] The development of a political women's movement in both countries was enhanced by the emergence of illustrious writers like George Sand and Hedwig Dohm, who drew popular attention to the 'woman question'.

Writing in the early years of the twentieth century, the literary critic Jean Larnac admitted that there were 'cinq fois plus d'hommes écrivains que de femmes' but asserted: 'Jamais il n'y eut, en France, un aussi grand nombre de femmes-auteurs, et l'on serait tenté d'en chercher la cause dans l'organisation de l'enseignement secondaire féminin et l'accession des femmes à l'enseignement supérieur'.[10] Therefore, when the First World War broke out, literary women were in a strong position to record, and have published, their fictional responses to an episode which would call into question the patriarchal value systems which continued to reign in the twentieth century.

The boundaries of this thesis have been laid down as a result of the

difficulties, insuperable in some cases, of obtaining work which is long out of print, and by a number of self-imposed limitations on genre and time scale. Although the thesis will refer to a wide range of texts about the First World War for discussion of topic and leitmotiv, the major themes of women's war writing will be illustrated by means of a close, comparative reading of selected works by the French writers Colette, Lucie Delarue-Mardrus, Jeanne Landre, Camille Mayran, Rachilde and Marcelle Tinayre; and by their German contemporaries Margarete Böhme, Ida Boy-Ed, Helene Christaller, Helene von Mühlau and Clara Viebig.

The selected texts meet specific criteria, chosen to create a homogeneous corpus which will allow for viable comparison and contrast: the selection focuses upon novels which, with one exception, were published during 1914-1918 and offer immediate responses to the war; the works were written by women with recognized literary careers in the early years of this century; and the writers' 'behind the lines' reaction to the events of the First World War forms the main focus, producing long-neglected fictional variations on the conflict.

A study of war literature which disregards the date of publication fails to observe the censorship restraints upon the contemporary novelist or the potential ramifications of the post-war novel. In his survey of French literature of the 1914-1918 period, Jean Vic describes post-war writing as 'la "littérature de paix", dont l'inspiration est différente, et dont l'étude demanderait des méthodes différentes aussi'.[11] The German National Sociälists 'gaben im Rahmen der weltanschaulichen Schulung der Betrachtung des ersten Weltkrieges besonderes Gewicht' - a fact which reveals but one aspect of the subject's political sensitivity.[12] Consequently, the narrow time scale adopted in this thesis ensures that the texts are 'unhampered by hindsight and accumulated abstractions',[13] but

raises the issues surrounding wartime propaganda.

In choosing writers who were enjoying literary success at the time of the First World War, it must be borne in mind that their work was written in expectation of publication and designed to reach a potential audience. Together with their male counterparts, women writers who addressed the topic of war during 1914-18, in the uncertainty of victory or defeat, were caught up in the contemporary net of censorship which obscured their personal view of events and checked their printed reaction. Given the importance of the printed word in conveying the spirit of the war years, there were potential links between literature and politics which ensured that 'the "spontaneous" literary response was thus embedded and often enmeshed in the official propaganda campaigns'.[14] It is clear, therefore, that each novel must be appraised as a purveyor of an ideological view - whether the purported aim be to amuse or to inspire - for literature may embrace, reject or disregard society's values, but it is 'never disengaged from the claims of time or social order.'[15]

In his patriotic endorsement of *L'Effort de la Femme française* Louis Barthou selects a letter from a front-line soldier, which is intended to set the tone of responses on the home front. Writing to his sister-in-law, the soldier remarks:

> L'armée se battra jusqu'au bout. Le seul danger que nous puissions craindre, c'est la lassitude, c'est le découragement public. Nos pires ennemis seront ceux qui gémiront que la guerre a assez duré, qu'il y a assez de deuils dans chaque foyer, assez de misère dans le pays et qu'il faut avoir pitié des mères et des filles...[16]

By offering women's reactions to the war, the writers were granted, within the limitations of censorship, the opportunity to emphasize the nobility or the futility of the human sacrifice which forms the centre of their tales. 'Faire aimer la France à l'étranger, faire aimer la patrie aux Français et susciter dévouement et

sacrifice. Comme les hommes, des femmes de lettres mettent leur prose ou leurs vers au service de la bonne cause'[17] is Françoise Thébaud's analysis of French women's literary donation to the Cause, while German novelists were implicitly aware of the influence of 'manche Schrift aus der Feder einer Frau, die uns auf Höhen trägt und Kraft, Begeisterung und Opfermut in uns entzündet'.[18]

Furthermore, the wartime conflict between patriotic tenets and pacifist principles was augmented by the ongoing confrontation between feminism and anti-feminism - the advent of war throwing gender issues into sharp relief. Evaluating literature published during 1914-1918 means accepting the texts within the restrictions of the prevailing philosophies of their age and, before criticizing the writers and the extent to which they adhere to patriarchal and patriotic standards, it is worth bearing in mind Kathleen Blake's assessment of women's writing:

> There is so much that is lamentable in women's heritage that feminist critics may make a habit of lamenting, and too often they lament that women writers did not give us more successful heroines, more to celebrate... I prefer to blame women's lot than the women artists who depicted it.[19]

This review of women's war novels as sites of ideological conflict ensures that the distinction between the novelist's personal beliefs and the limitations facing her fictional heroine become a central issue.

Writing in the nineteenth century Harriet Taylor Mill explained that successful literary women were limited by the judgment offered by 'vulgar men' that 'learning makes women unfeminine, and that literary ladies are likely to be bad wives';[20] and women who demonstrated 'une individualité trop marquée et un métier d'homme' were criticized for misplaced priorities.[21] Therefore, the

period of wartime transition presented women writers with nascent feminist inclinations with a conflict of interests. As Harriet Taylor Mill went on to reiterate:

> Successful literary women are just as unlikely to prefer the cause of women to their own social consideration. They depend on men's opinion for their literary as well as for their feminine successes; and such is their bad opinion of men, that they believe there is not more than one in ten thousand who does not dislike and fear strength, sincerity, or high spirit in a woman.[22]

In an androcentric society and 'dans la pénombre, sans air, sans soins, sur un terrain hostile à toute floraison féminine',[23] women writers in both France and Germany faced censure which transcended acceptable academic criticism. In *Die deutsche Literatur der Gegenwart 1848-1858* Robert Prutz had stated that women took to writing merely to compensate for shortcomings in their personal lives:

> ...wir haben unter unsern heutigen Frauen so viele Schriftstellerinnen, weil wir so viele unglückliche Frauen haben, in der Literatur suchen sie die Befriedigung, welche die Häuslichkeit, dieser nächste und natürlichste Boden des Weibes, ihnen nicht gewährt...'[24]

In France Barbey d'Aurevilly, who published a number of articles on 'femmes de lettres' under the title *Les Bas-bleus*, claimed: 'Les femmes, même avec de l'esprit et du talent, n'arrivent jamais à des succès qui durent, et c'est une justice de la destinée, car les femmes n'ont pas été mises dans le monde pour y faire ce que nous y faisons.'[25]

Nor was it a foregone conclusion that variations on traditional gender roles would win the approval of the women who, as Jules Bertaut proclaimed, largely made up the readership:

> Vous savez que les personnes qui, à l'heure actuelle, constituent en France le vrai public littéraire, celui qui lit la littérature d'imagination, celui qui la juge en décrétant le succès ou l'insuccès d'un livre, ce sont les femmes, encore et toujours les femmes. Que voulez-vous? Pour lire, il faut des loisirs.[26]

The prospective audience for women's novels in both France and Germany 'was largely comprised of middle- and upper-class readers who could be expected to share the essentially middle-class assumptions upon which the received feminine ideal was based',[27] and writers who sought to counter the viewpoint of that particular class were in danger of alienating their public:

> les romancières, etc., qui devraient se faire les ardentes propagandistes des idées féministes à l'extension desquelles elles doivent la situation qu'elles occupent, s'en déclarent au contraire soit entièrement détachées, soit même adversaires. Chacune fait effort pour mettre à part sa condition propre du reste du féminisme, dans sa prétention naïve à être une intelligence transcendante qui aurait franchi tous les obstacles et parce qu'elle manque de courage pour avouer une opinion qui n'a pas encore la majorité.[28]

It is evident, therefore, that the sex of the novelist is no guide to the feminist leanings of a text. Feminism is 'an alignment of political interests and not a shared female experience'[29] and, as Toril Moi rightly points out, 'the very fact of being *female* does not necessarily guarantee a feminist approach.'[30] Women writers who wished to expose 'the psychology of oppression, the psychology of women living under patriarchy'[31] shared their profession with contemporaries whose work continued to foster sexual stereotypes. In taking women and war as their theme in the emotive climate of the conflict itself, these were novelists who, to a greater or lesser extent, consciously nailed their colours to the mast.

Yet, however conservative their outlook, women writers of 1914 could not ignore the significance of the First World War as a 'carrefour de deux

The GREATEST MOTHER *in the* WORLD

The Trustees of the Imperial War Museum, London

whose presence endangers male sexuality.

The third perspective is highlighted by the inscription carved into the pedestal upon which the woman appears to be raised. 'The Greatest Mother in the World' is a title which re-emphasizes the maternal image of the nurse's role, but also the analogy with the Christian Mother of God - the Virgin Mary holding the body of the crucified Christ. This traditional image manifests women's suffering as the agony of the *mater dolorosa*, captured by Michelangelo in his celebrated *Pietà*. Transformed into a Marian statue, the female figure, with her sorrowful eyes raised to heaven, is the mother who has witnessed the mutilation of her son.

The same three conflicting messages offered by this nurse/soldier image are reflected in the literary works analysed in this thesis and offer a coherent structure to the literary analysis. After the writers and novels have been set in context in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2, the second part of the thesis embraces a tripartite form which corresponds to the three identifiable fictional responses. The chapter entitled *Hierarchical Oppositions* is an examination of the literary depiction of traditional sexual roles, as women's peacetime subjugation is magnified by the chivalric codes of a wartime patriarchal society which thrive upon binary oppositions. The emphasis changes in Chapter 4, *Re-drawing the Lines*, with a disruption of the traditional order as wartime disillusionment, male casualties and the discovery of female independence upset the balance between the sexes. Here novelists subvert received expectations of gender relations, countering phallocentrism from within patriotic discourse or as a form of pacifist engagement. In *Female Voices*, the final chapter, the writers portray the community on the home front and strive to express women's suffering, yearning to escape the limitations of gender conflict and to embrace the issues of women

and war. This third phase is an exercise which, as Christa Reinig has described, is fraught with difficulties:

> Literatur ist ein hartes Männergeschäft von dreitausend Jahren her. Das muß jede Autorin erfahren, wenn sie das Wort "Ich" gebraucht [...] Die Formen und Formeln der Dichtersprache sind nicht geschaffen, daß ein weibliches Ich sich darin artikulieren kann.[37]

An analysis of women's success in creating an autonomous female voice within the restrictions of patriarchal vocabulary will, therefore, form the focus of this final chapter.

These three sub-sections do not provide exclusive categories into which the selected novels may be neatly packaged. One particular theme may predominate within an individual text, but the three contrasting strands - as in Foringer's picture - struggle for supremacy within the framework. In discussions of male war literature there is often an attempt to group poetic or fictional texts into stages of consciousness,[38] moving, for example, from the patriotism of Rupert Brooke to the anger and compassion of Rosenberg; or from the alienation of Dorgelès to Zweig's anti-war message. By contrast, the women's novels analysed here provide textual interplay between the patriotic/pacifist and feminist/anti-feminist discourses, lending the works their particular significance and interest, as they reflect the shifts in emphasis taking place in this transitional period. Although the experiences of women during the First World War are obviously more heterogeneous than this body of work could suggest in its white, primarily middle-class and heterosexual view of life, the texts mirror a variety of emotional and intellectual responses which disclose women's perceptions of the First World War.

The Great War offers particularly fertile ground for comparison and

contrast of the literature of France and Germany. As geographical neighbours transformed once again into adversaries, the literary women of both countries continued to work in parallel, but were trapped behind their national barriers. They underwent the same momentous experience, yet were divided by the tangible fortification of the trenches, the intellectual restrictions of censorship, and the patriotic pressures which urged them to regard their female counterparts across the border as enemies rather than sisters.

In their study of nineteenth-century English literature, entitled *The Madwoman in the Attic*, Gilbert and Gubar claimed:

> we were surprised by the coherence of theme and imagery that we encountered in the works of writers who were often geographically, historically, and psychologically distant from each other.[39]

In undertaking this comparative analysis, I wish to examine whether French and German writers responded in a 'collective, sisterly manner to a common social reality',[40] despite the consequences of physical and psychological distance, and the divisions imposed upon them by patriarchal leaders.

The women-centred approach in this thesis to some extent adheres to Elaine Showalter's advocacy of 'gynocriticism', which supersedes feminist criticism of male authors and concentrates upon women as the producers of textual meaning. However, in focusing upon women writers I wish to heed the warning that 'merely to substitute one canon for another is to perpetuate the terms which feminist literary criticism should challenge.'[41] In charting women's experiences, the aim is to add some of the missing pieces to the overall picture, rather than to reiterate the age-old insistence upon 'woman as other'.

In pursuing my line of thought I have sought inspiration across the

spectrum of feminist criticism. This thesis follows in the tradition of Anglo-American feminist criticism in its search for a female literary tradition, owing a debt to the pioneering work of Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar in particular; but, in my quest for solutions to the inherent problems of articulating an authentic female voice, I have also been influenced by the writings of the French feminists, notably Hélène Cixous, Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva.[42] The approach adopted may, therefore, be subsumed under two broad areas of established scholarship. Firstly, in its unearthing and study of once popular, but now predominantly little-known, women writers of the early twentieth century, it contributes to the feminist objective of 'making women visible';[43] secondly, in its concentration upon women's fictional responses to the conflict of 1914-1918, it supplements First World War literary studies.

In her critical assessment of French women writers in the early twentieth century, Germaine Brée suggests that under closer scrutiny 'their work might yield a number of themes and patterns that would go a long way towards defining these women's real, as opposed to their official, image of themselves.'[44] It is hoped that this analysis of the war writings of French and German women will bear out that contention, contribute to a greater understanding of women's ideological responses to the conflict, and extend the boundaries of received notions of the literary heritage of the First World War.

NOTES

1 See Holger Klein's Introduction to *The First World War in Fiction* (London: Macmillan, 1976), p.2.

2 See the Introduction to *Behind the Lines. Gender and the Two World Wars* edited by Higonnet, Jenson, Michel, Weitz (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), p.14.

3 Germaine Greer quoted in Elaine Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own* (London: Virago, 1979), p.11.

4 Elaine Showalter, *op.cit.*, pp.11-12.

5 John Cruickshank, *Variations on Catastrophe* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), pp.42-43.

6 Catherine Reilly (ed.), *Scars upon my Heart. Women's Poetry and Verse of the First World War* (London: Virago, 1981); and Sandra M. Gilbert, 'Soldier's Heart: Literary Men, Literary Women, and the Great War' in *SIGNS*, Vol.VIII, no 3. (The University of Chicago Press, Spring 1983), pp.422-450.

7 See Judith Kazantzis' preface to *Scars upon my Heart*, *op.cit.*, p.xxiii.

8 George Eliot, quoted in Ellen Moers, *Literary Women*, (London: W.H.Allen & Co. Ltd, 1977), p.63.

9 Elke Frederiksen, *Women Writers of Germany, Austria and Switzerland* (New York, Westport, Connecticut, London: Greenwood Press, 1989), p.xix.

10 Jean Larnac, *Histoire de la littérature féminine en France* (Paris: Editions Kra, 1928), pp.222-223.

11 Jean Vic, *La Littérature de guerre*, Tome I (Paris: Les Presses françaises, 1923), p.v.

12 See Peter Aley, *Jugendliteratur im Dritten Reich* (Hamburg: Verlag für Buchmarkt-Forschung), 1967, p.131.

13 John Cruickshank, *op.cit.*, p.35.

14 Holger Klein, *op.cit.*, p.1.

15 Foreword to *The Authority of Experience. Essays in Feminist Criticism*, edited by Arlyn Diamond and Lee R. Edwards (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1977), p.x.

16 Louis Barthou, *L'Effort de la Femme Française* (Paris: Bloud & Gay, 1917), p.12.

17 Françoise Thébaut, *La Femme au temps de la guerre de 14* (Paris: Editions Stock, 1986), p.246.

18 Margarete Henschke, *Der Krieg und die Frauen* (Berlin: Protestantischer Schriftenvertrieb, 1915), p.26.

19 See Sydney Janet Kaplan's chapter 'Varieties of Feminist Criticism' in *Making a Difference. Feminist Literary Criticism*, edited by Gayle Greene and Coppélia Kahn (London and New York: Metheun, 1985), pp.51-52.

20 Quoted in Jane Miller, *Women writing about Men* (London: Virago, 1986), p.46.

21 Jean Larnac, *op.cit.*, p.276.

22 Quoted in Jane Miller, *op.cit.*, p.46.

23 J. Joseph-Renaud, *Le Catéchisme féministe* (Paris: Rey, 1910), p.76.

24 Quoted by Elke Frederiksen in her article 'German women writers in the nineteenth century: where are they?' in Susan L. Cocalis and Kay Goodman, *Beyond the Eternal Feminine. Critical Essays on Women and German Literature* (Stuttgart: Verlag Hans-Dieter Heinz), 1982, p.181.

25 Quoted in Jean Larnac, *op.cit.*, p.220.

26 Jules Bertaut, *La Littérature féminine d'aujourd'hui*, (Paris, 1909), pp.5-6.

27 Susan Koppelmann Cornillon (ed.), *Images of women in Fiction* (Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1973), p.29.

28 Madeleine Pelletier, *Le Féminisme et ses militantes* (Paris: Les Documents du Progrès, 1909), p.20.

29 See Michèle Barrett's 'Feminism and the Definition of Cultural Politics' in *Feminist Literary Theory. A Reader*, edited by Mary Eagleton (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), p.160.

30 See Moi's chapter entitled 'Feminist Literary Criticism' in *Modern Literary Theory* edited by Ann Jefferson and David Robey (London: B.T. Batsford, 2nd edition 1986), p.206.

31 See Judith Kegan Gardiner's article 'Mind mother: psychoanalysis and feminism' in Greene and Kahn, *op.cit.*, p.121.

32 Marcelle Tinayre, *La Veillée des armes* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1915), p.225.

33 Maurice Rickards, *Posters of the First World War* (London: Evelyn, Adams and Mackay, 1969), p.22.

34 For further comment on this phenomenon see 'La Coupable' by Catherine B. Clement in *La Jeune née* (Paris: Union Générale d'Editions, 1975), p.101.

35 See the representation and discussion of this image in 'Soldier's Heart: Literary Men, Literary Women, and the Great War' in Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *No Man's Land. Volume 2, The Place of the Woman Writer in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press), 1989, p.288.

36 For further comment see Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Anthropologie structurelle* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1958), p.247.

37 Quoted in Gisela Brinker-Gabler, 'Das weibliche Ich' in *Die Frau als Heldin und Autorin*, edited by Wolfgang Paulsen (Bern und München, Francke Verlag, 1979), p.55.

38 See Jon Silkin's introduction to *The Penguin Book of First World War Poetry* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1981), p.30.

39 Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979), p.xi.

40 Nelly Furman, 'The Politics of Language' in Greene and Kahn, *op.cit.*, p.62.

41 See the opening chapter, 'Feminist Scholarship and the social construction of woman', in Greene and Kahn, *op.cit.*, p.24.

42 For a comparison of the work of Anglo-American and French feminists see Toril Moi, *Sexual/Textual Politics. Feminist Literary Theory* (London: Methuen, 1985); and Susan Sellers, *Language and Sexual Difference* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Education Ltd., 1991).

43 See the chapter on 'Feminist Literary Criticism' by Toril Moi in *Modern Literary Theory*, edited by Ann Jefferson and David Robey, *op.cit.*, p.215.

44 Germaine Brée, *Women Writers in France* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1973), pp.41-42.

PART ONE

CHAPTER 1

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

Although this is a literary study, it abides by the view, commonly shared by feminist critics, that knowledge of the social and cultural contexts to the production of women's writing is a desirable prerequisite for textual analysis.[1] The pitfalls of drawing simplistic links between fiction and reality are evident, given the role of literary conventions and authorial subjectivity in literary production, and one must avoid the danger of believing that 'the "picturing" of experience is gender-neutral or free of ideological value.'[2] Nevertheless, as contemporary issues fuelled women's war writing of 1914-1918, a study of women's history during this period should ideally illuminate, rather than distort, the ideological battles conducted upon the printed pages.

Social historians have produced well-documented evidence on women's wartime roles and the consequences for the cause of female liberation. While this chapter provides no more than a brief comparative summary of the historical contexts in France and Germany, it aims to highlight the themes of patriarchal oppression in pre-war society and the subsequent effect of the First World War upon gender relations.

PRE-WAR SOCIETY

Before looking in more detail at the 1914-1918 period, a survey of the status of French and German women in pre-war society forms a necessary prelude, the eagerness with which women seized their wartime opportunities being better understood within the context of their legal and social oppression. The Napoleonic Code of 21 March 1804, enshrining women's secondary status in law, continued to hold sway in France and reduce women to the role of perpetual minors who exchanged guardianship by the father for obedience to the spouse. As Jules Simon explained in his prognostication of *La Femme du Vingtième Siècle*, published in 1892: 'La femme est assise dans le train et se déplace en même temps que lui; mais c'est le mari qui surveille la locomotive.'[3] The husband took control of the financial affairs, exerted 'la puissance paternelle' over the children, and was granted such anomalies as the right to murder his wife if he were to surprise her 'in flagrante delicto', while he might be punished with a maximum fine of two thousand francs if he were to install a concubine in the marital home.[4]

The relationship between French women and the Catholic Church was also exploited to guarantee women's lowly position and subsequent disenfranchisement: traditional religious teaching presented 'Woman' as the 'complice de Satan, impure, responsable de tous les péchés des hommes, instrument de damnation',[5] while secular opponents of universal suffrage emphasized female piety and devotion to the Mass, arousing fears that votes for women would increase the clerical peril and create reactionary movements. The Eve/Virgin Mary dichotomy left the female sex caught between opposing role-models, cheered only by the priests' assurance of 'un paradis de justice où l'âme

féminine vaut l'âme masculine, où tous ses sacrifices terrestres se trouveront compensés!'[6]

Across the border, within the pyramidal power structure of imperial Germany, women were restricted by similar legislation and sexist ideology. The hierarchy of each social stratum confined women to the lower echelons, subjecting bourgeois ladies to the same limitations as their counterparts in the working-class milieu, with only financial security to ease the burden. In the days of the Teutonic tribes, Tacitus had proclaimed that only the women, the children, the weak and the enslaved should concern themselves with the housekeeping,[7] and this 'Kinder, Kirche, Küche' mentality retained its influence across the centuries. The revised civil code of 1900 underlined the principle of the husband's 'eheherrliche Vormundschaft' and restricted women's control over their offspring,[8] while the Catholic Centre Party continued to promote an idealized concept of motherhood which kept women out of the work place and confined them to the home.[9]

As we shall see in the fictional texts, this patriarchal authority did not go unchallenged, the seeds of discontent sown in the nineteenth century being reaped in the war years. There had been advocates of female equality in earlier centuries - Christine de Pisan, Poulain de la Barre, Condorcet and Olympe de Gouages to name but four in France - but their lone voices raised in anger against 'phallocratie' did not constitute a women's movement.[10] It was in the nineteenth century that theory was linked to direct action in both France and Germany to create a feminist movement conscious of its own identity.

The word 'féminisme' appears in the *Dictionnaire Robert* in 1837, its origin cited as the French Revolution.[11] In the first half of the nineteenth century the doctrines of Charles Fourier and Saint-Simon raised issues of sexual

equality;[12] and, during the July Monarchy, the radical thinker Flora Tristan sought to analyse women's alienation, announcing the synthesis of feminism and socialism.[13]

However, it was in the latter half of the century that a number of feminist societies were established on both sides of the border. The first German feminist group, the *Allgemeiner Deutscher Frauenverein* was founded in 1865;[14] and, in the following year, the French came to the forefront when the *Société pour la Revendication des Droits de la Femme* was formed by a Republican named Maria Deraismes.[15] However, despite these signs of progress, further advancement was hindered at this time because feminism, to its detriment, became linked to the bourgeoisie and was branded a fashionable pastime for wealthy, unoccupied ladies. It did not capture the hearts or minds of a population whose attention was diverted by the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian war.[16]

The 'Pétroleuses' of the Paris Commune of 1871, epitomized by the figure of the Red Virgin, Louise Michel, brought the women's cause into the public eye once again, but the actions of the female Communards did not lead to any revolutionary changes in French women's role in society. Hubertine Auclert founded the *Droit des femmes* in 1876, but its adherents were mainly bourgeois women who took an ultimately conservative standpoint.[17]

Nevertheless, in both defeated France and victorious Germany, the links between left-wing politics and the question of female liberation were strengthened at this time. After 1879 the *Parti ouvrier français* (the *POF*) and the *Section française de l'Internationale ouvrière* (the *SFIO*) admitted women into their ranks, representing 3% of the membership. Léonie Rouzade (1839-1916), a one-time member of the *Droit des femmes*, was unsuccessful in her candidature for the municipal council of Paris in 1880, but she and the anti-clerical, anti-capitalist

campaigner Paule Mink (1839-1901) raised the profile of socialist women; in 1899 Elisabeth Renaud (1845-1932) and Louise Saumoneau (1879-1949), two working-class women, founded the *Groupe féministe socialiste* in Paris's Latin Quarter; Aline Valette (1850-1899) became secretary to the *POF* National Council; and in the early years of the twentieth century the socialist feminist Madeleine Pelletier (1864-1939), who found anarchist journals an outlet for her views on military conscription for women, contraception and abortion,[18] took a further step by joining the party executive of the *SFIO*.[19]

In Germany the *Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands* (the *SPD*) took up the issue of women's liberation and, until the formation of the middle-class suffrage leagues from 1902 onward, was the sole political advocate of female franchise.[20] The success of the German socialist women's movement lay in its close association with the *SPD* and the Free Trade Unions, and by 1914 16.1% of the *SPD* membership was female, a higher level than that achieved in France.[21]

Unfortunately, the cause of female emancipation suffered from a lack of internal coherence, the class divide creating a similar rupture in both France and Germany and facing committed working-class women with a question of allegiance to sex or class. Should they join their middle-class sisters in the feminist struggle? Or should they work with their socialist brothers in the revolution against capitalist society? Louise Saumoneau, representing the *Groupe féministe socialiste*, claimed that proletarian women should not direct their attacks at male workers but rather at the bourgeois feminists,[22] a philosophy to which she constantly adhered throughout the war:

> Dégagée de l'esprit d'individualisme qui est la base du féminisme bourgeois, nous ne voulons pas seulement travailler à l'abolition de l'antagonisme des sexes, qui n'est que secondaire, mais à l'abolition de tous les antagonismes qui pullulent dans cette société bassée sur le plus

inique: l'antagonisme de classe qui est le créateur de tous les autres.[23]

When the *Groupe des Femmes socialistes* was founded in 1913, the confusion continued with disagreements between campaigners like Madeleine Pelletier, who argued that some degree of feminism was essential to their success, and opponents like Saumoneau, who wished to recruit only from within the socialist party. Across the strategic divide Hélène Brion, the feminist campaigner and schoolteacher, argued that solidarity was within one's sex and not one's class;[24] and when the socialist Madeleine Pelletier became leader of the suffrage group *La Solidarité des femmes*, its bourgeois membership rejected her militant style[25] and her attempt to emulate the British Suffragettes in an active crusade.

In Germany there were comparable altercations as female activists planned their offensive. The feminist campaigners Emma Ihrer, Helene Grünberg and Gertrud Hanna sought to organize women within the Free Trade Union structure, while radical socialists like Ottilie Baader were opposed by reformists such as Marie Juchacz. Discord within the women's movement was most clearly symbolized by the thirteen-year dispute waged between Clara Zetkin, who believed that her party should never abandon the class struggle even in the cause of women's liberation, and the aristocratic Lily Braun, who sought emancipation within a capitalist framework.[26] Zetkin, who was a leading theoretician and editor of the influential paper *Die Gleichheit*, emphasized that women in different social classes had distinct needs which precluded the idea of a united front.[27] Her view clashed with Braun, co-editor of *Die Frauenbewegung*, a journal which embraced women's groups regardless of their political persuasion.[28] This clash of loyalties was to weaken the women's cause in both countries.

This era was, therefore, to witness a continuous struggle between

progressive and reactionary values. In the educational sphere prospects for women had improved in France, with the Camille Sée law of 1880 creating secondary education for girls. French women were gradually entering higher education, the first woman doctor of medicine being Mlle Gibelin in 1875,[29] and the first woman being called to the bar in 1900.[30] In Germany, Heidelberg University admitted women as 'Hörerinnen' in 1891, and by the outbreak of war the vast majority of German universities were open to both sexes, with female students numbering 4177 in the summer semester of 1914.[31]

Yet the attainment of academic qualifications was not enough in itself to guarantee equality with male colleagues. Madeleine Pelletier, herself a doctor of medicine, explained in her article *Le Féminisme et ses Militantes* (1909):

> Les femmes admises depuis plus de trente ans aux études médicales ne commencent guère qu'aujourd'hui à arriver tant bien que mal à se faire une clientèle. Pendant de longues années, les doctoresses pauvres devaient pour vivre s'astreindre à des besognes que dédaignent les docteurs. Avec un diplôme égal, il leur fallait se faire sages-femmes, masseuses, dans les quartiers riches de Paris, les médicins leur abandonnaient les piqûres, pansements, etc.[32]

Despite the progress, both practical and ideological obstacles remained. 1901 saw the creation of the *Conseil national des femmes françaises* (*CNFF*), whose stated aim was 'de procurer aux femmes de tous pays l'occasion de se rencontrer pour discuter ensemble les questions relatives au bien public et à la sécurité de la famille.'[33] The desire to break down national barriers and encourage international sisterhood was couched in age-old rhetoric about 'the woman's place':

> Que vienne l'heure de la souffrance, l'heure du malheur, l'heure de l'épreuve, l'homme nous trouvera à son côté. Nous n'oublierons jamais que le plus beau privilège de la femme a toujours été et reste encore celui d'aimer, de secourir et de consoler.[34]

The desire to give an autonomous voice to women's issues was constantly thwarted, with campaigners still reliant upon the support of men to achieve their objectives. Two of the major consciousness-raising publications of the nineteenth century were the work of male authors: John Stuart Mill's essay *On the Subjection of Women* (1869) which, having been translated into both French and German, attracted a European, purportedly middle-class readership;[35] and August Bebel's work on women under Socialism, published in 1879 and translated into French as *La Femme et le Socialisme*, which rejected bourgeois feminism in favour of the socialist revolution.[36] These two texts reflect the internal conflicts within the women's movements: bourgeois feminism alienated working-class women, while socialist women found themselves caught in an impasse while waiting for the revolution. Women within the German Socialist Party were expected to subjugate their feminism to the socialist cause, and French socialism failed to accept an independent women's movement. It was a question of priorities which would raise its head when war broke out in 1914.

Despite the progress made in improving women's rights, and the fact that International Women's Day was celebrated for the first time in Paris on 9 March 1914,[37] there was a concerted anti-feminist backlash. A publication by Théodore Joran entitled *Le Suffrage des Femmes* (1913) did not, as one might suppose, proclaim sexual equality at the ballot box, but presumed to expose the horrors of the 'femme-terroriste', revealing that the woman who 'est autre' was not suited to voting rights.[38]

Pre-war history, therefore, reveals a record of triumph and failure, with a select number of female figures attracting the headlines in a society which was generally unresponsive to the question of women's rights. Madeleine Pelletier attributed women's uneven success rate to a failure to harness collective action to

a carefully defined goal:

> La première raison tenait à ce que ces groupes, très restreints d'ailleurs, n'étaient guère composés que de généraux sans armée. Chaque adhérente y arrivait avec son féminisme à elle et loin de désirer recevoir des idées, elle comptait bien y faire prédominer les siennes.[39]

Yet, while she admitted that French feminist groups were 'bien isolés, ou bien faiblement unis' she added that 'le progrès des idées d'émancipation de la femme n'en est pas moins très réel'.[40] Therefore, the First World War was to follow this active demonstration for female emancipation observable in nineteenth-century France and Germany, where the outer symbols of patriarchal power had gradually come under attack from newly-formed feminist groups, and when legislative improvements in social and educational affairs had offered women glimpses of sexual equality. The outbreak of war was to see the continuation of that process, with a clash of interests between traditional standards and the unexpected opportunities for women to revise stereotypical assumptions about gender roles.

The War Years

It is ironic that a woman was the second casualty of a war in which women were conventionally regarded as non-participants. Countess Sophie Chotek was by the side of her husband, Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria, as the couple drove into Sarajevo on 28 June 1914, and subsequently shared the assassin's bullets when Gavrilo Princip pulled the trigger. The murder of the heir to the Habsburg Monarchy was regarded as the curtain-raiser to the First World War, but his spouse was an unimportant, purportedly unintentional, fatality.[41]

Similarly, the women of France and Germany were the supposedly insignificant players in the political scenario who found themselves drawn unexpectedly into the spotlight by a new concept of war which involved the whole of the civilian population.

If French and German women writers were to look to their politically-motivated sisters for inspiration, they would observe an apparent reversal of fortune for the women's movement at the outbreak of the First World War as patriarchal power combined with patriotic doctrines. Hélène Brion, one of the few French feminists to openly oppose the war, bemoaned the change of priorities, as war undermined the values which feminism had sought to uphold and placed the onus back onto the male sex:

> Dans le système d'appréciation des valeurs que la guerre rend inévitable, l'homme seul compte. C'est lui la valeur, le futur soldat [...] on donne à la femme la suggestion de la reconnaissance, de l'humilité qu'elle doit avoir devant ce protecteur qu'on lui impose sans qu'elle l'ait demandé, et qui est souvent, dans la vie civile, son pire adversaire.[42]

As war broke out, patriotic images aggrandized the male sex to the status of champions and defenders - the active role of the partnership in which the woman played the passive, and subsequently humble, part.

In France messages from female war supporters accentuated the second-class status of their sex and the supremacy of the soldier over the woman for whom he risked his life: 'il lui suffira de montrer sa blessure pour faire rougir celle qui oserait lui faire sentir sa supériorité'.[43] Even when the focus was on peace in a pamphlet entitled *Un Devoir urgent pour les femmes*, published by the *Comité International des Femmes pour la Paix permanente*, the stress lay upon women's initially modest role in the war scenario:

> Devant le calme et la résolution de ceux qui partaient, la crainte d'être indignes d'eux, de les affaiblir par nos larmes, nous a redressées [...] Il fallait agir. Travailler pour les soldats, pour les prisonniers, soigner les blessés, venir au secours des réfugiés, des orphelins, aider les chômeurs. Tout cela nous l'avons fait et le faisons encore, sans presqu'y songer, trop avides de donner un peu à ceux qui se donnent tout entiers.[44]

There is a constant reiteration of women's insignificance in the war experience and that 'en face de tels événements ces pauvres gestes ne peuvent suffire.'[45] If there was any glory in war its supposedly natural setting was the battlefield - the arena from which women were excluded.

Nor was this form of female self-deprecation a peculiarly French occupation. While French women insisted on their humble status, similar themes were adopted on the other side of the enemy lines, as German propaganda brought home the sexual divisions:

> So schneidend und eingreifend wie jetzt im Kriege ist uns der Unterschied der Geschlechter schon lange nicht mehr entgegengetreten. Wir dürfen seit etwa 20 Jahren studieren wie die Männer; wir dürfen in Werkstätten und Kontoren und Fabriken arbeiten wie sie; wir werden wohl geringer honoriert, aber wir durften als Lehrer und Ärzte, als Handwerker und Künstler unsern Beruf ausüben, und nun kommt der Krieg, und wir sehen: wir sind doch nur Frauen![46]

The initial effect of the mobilization was to stress sexual difference to the detriment of the female population. Feminists who had striven against patriarchy were now expected to kowtow to the war machine and place their destiny in male hands: 'La guerre est faite par les hommes, ils restent maîtres de la guerre. Elle durera le temps qu'ils voudront.'[47] As the male was raised to the status of protector of the unarmed female, scenes in which women flocked to honour the departing soldiers were an outer manifestation of the inner inequality between the sexes.

In 1914 patriotic utterances urged a change of priorities, reminding women of their primary - and thereby patriarchal - loyalties. The French campaigner Marguerite Durand, whose newspaper *La Fronde* had become France's first feminist daily in 1897, expressed the general viewpoint of the bourgeoisie she represented when she wrote: 'Toutes les théories féministes seront énergiquement défendues [...] quand la paix sera revenue; mais actuellement nous sommes en temps de guerre.'[48] The *Groupe des Femmes socialistes* adopted a similar approach and, with few exceptions, quietly adhered to the socialist party's pro-war stance, temporarily abandoning their own objectives for the sake of the 'Cause'.

While French feminists returned 'au camp respectif selon l'idéal national',[49] the Germans also evoked their status as 'alle eines Volkes Glieder, einer großen Mutter Kinder.'[50] In the struggle for women's rights the German campaigner Gertrud Bäumer, leader of the *Bund deutscher Frauen*, had spoken of 'Wir Frauen' as an all-embracing 'sisterhood'. When peacetime opponents of female emancipation had criticized the German women's movement for its 'antinationale, undeutsche Art', she had claimed 'daß in der Frauenbewegung etwas steckt, das über die Grenzen, die spezifisch nationale Kulturinhalte umschließen, hinaus weist'[51] and she had defended similarities between feminist campaigns in other countries:

> Der deutschen Frauenbewegung daraus einen Vorwurf machen, daß sie so ähnlich verläuft wie die im Ausland, ist ungefähr so töricht, als wollte man es für unnational erklären, Eisenbahnen, Trams und Telephon zu haben, weil das Ausland diese Einrichtungen auch hat.[52]

Pre-war feminist supporters promoted the notion of a universal bond between women - 'So war das Wort "Schwestern" für die Frauen der anderen Länder

natürlich'[53] - promoting the 'symbolic links between women and peace'[54] which purportedly underlined the disparity between the sexes: men as warmongers and women as pacifists.

In the face of world war, however, nationalist impulses overtook the desire for international unity:

> Über Parteien und Weltanschauungen hinweg eint sich im gegenwärtigen Augenblick unser Volk als Volk, das für seine Existenz ringt. Und jeder der jungen Männer, die in diesen Tagen im Ausmarsch durch unsere Straßen ziehen, verteidigt nicht seine Partei oder seine Klasse, sondern uns alle - die ganze große Masse aller anderen.[55]

Echoing the words of the German Kaiser, Gertrud Bäumer underlined the importance of national accord in times of crisis: 'heute sind wir nicht einzelne, heute sind wir nur Volk'.[56]

Consequently, feminist philosophies were silenced by the very women who had once been its fervent promoters: 'Tant que durera la guerre, les femmes de l'ennemi seront aussi l'ennemi'[57] was the response of the French women's movement - an attitude which was matched by Gertrud Bäumer's scepticism, expressed in 1918 as the misery of war continued: 'Wir deutschen Frauen wissen nicht, ob bei den Frauen unserer Feinde dies Grauen vor der Maß- und Sinnlosigkeit ist, die das Weitergehen des Krieges um jeden Preis erzwingt.'[58] There was a shift of loyalties from women's solidarity - and the desire for female equality - to a sense of national community in which women continued to retain inferior status within the heterosexual couple.

Gertrud Bäumer's response mirrored the sentiments of Marguerite Durand in France. It was Bäumer's initiative which led to the founding of the *Nationaler Frauendienst* in 1914, which helped women to undertake welfare work in the

community,[59] while Durand promoted the opportunities which the war offered French women to prove their worth, but in a manner which was acceptable to the most misogynist of opponents by the espousal of traditional assumptions about the 'woman's place':

> Il nous faut subir courageusement l'adversité, donner confiance à ceux qui partent, veiller maternellement sur ceux qui restent. Il nous faut panser des blessures physiques et consoler des peines morales. Il faut nous montrer enfin, en accomplissant loyalement les devoirs que réclame de nous la Société, dignes des droits que nous lui demandons.[60]

The duties which women were to undertake in wartime France - and which did not, as history was to reveal, lead to immediate post-war political franchise - were safely ensconced within the accepted boundaries of femininity. Examples of maternal care - tending the wounds and consoling the downcast - were all reactive rather than proactive roles, in which women helped to alleviate the pain which they had no political power to prevent.

Stereotypical images, such as the 'Angel in the House,' were frequently promoted in wartime propaganda, with the French soldier taking comfort in the memory of his home which 'l'ange gardien maintient fleuri et parfumé pour le retour!'[61] French female patriots manifested their allegiance to their country by encouraging the members of their own sex to forsake ideas of personal liberation and return to the home. In *La Femme française. Son activité pendant la guerre*, the message proclaims:

> Plus que jamais, pendant la guerre, la place de la femme est à la maison: à ce foyer dont elle devient subitement la gardienne et le défenseur après en avoir été seulement l'âme et le coeur.[62]

The progress made by women in the academic sphere was ignored by wartime

propagandists, as emphasis on education was directed towards the foundation of 'des écoles pour former de bonnes épouses et de bonnes mères'.[63] It was an extolling of traditional roles, urging women to take refuge in the private sphere while their husbands fought the public battles.

In Germany such sentiments were found in a propaganda leaflet entitled *Frauentrost und Frauenpflicht zur Kriegszeit*, in which women were told:

> Jetzt, wo die Männer die Heimat verlassen mußten, ist die Frau mehr als je berufen, Hüterin des häuslichen Herdes zu sein.[64]

German propagandists were equally adamant about the importance of 'gute, tüchtige, kluge Hausfrauen' and - despite women's potential ability to fill the vacancies left by men - of the woman's place in the kitchen: 'ich sehe mit Freude und Bewunderung auf ihre tapfere Pflichterfüllung. - Aber - Kochen sollten sie nebenbei, oder später doch alle auch erlernen, - für den deutschen Mann und das deutsche Vaterland'.[65] In an article entitled *Der Krieg und die Frauen* Margárete Henschke admitted in 1915: 'Die Leistung der Frauen im Kriege ist keine grundsätzlich andere als im Frieden';[66] and, without any detectable hint of irony, Dr. Käthe Schirmacher was to proclaim that the home front should provide a squadron of women armed with kitchen utensils: 'Nicht nur das Schwert ist eine Waffe, der Kochlöffel ist im "Hungerkrieg" ebenso wichtig.'[67]

Interestingly, the question of the woman's wartime domestic and maternal role was treated far more systematically by the Germans than the French. The falling birth rate in France was giving cause for alarm, the emergence of neo-malthusian campaigners like the anti-clerical, anti-militarist Nelly Roussel adding to the general concern.[68] Yet the French patriarchal reaction was an appeal to the goodwill of the female sex, as Dr. Doléry, a member of the *Académie de*

médecine, urged women to return to their traditional role out of patriotic duty:

> La maternité est l'expression sommaire de la vie dans la femme et par la femme. C'est proprement la signification et l'unique raison d'être de la femme [...] Quel est le grand devoir de la femme? Quelle est sa rayonnante mission, la tâche sacrée que la nation attend d'elle? Enfanter, encore enfanter, toujours enfanter![69]

In contrast, the Germans responded with the institution of 'Frauendienstpflicht' to regulate the development of wives and mothers. 'Hausfrau und Mutter sein, ist ein Beruf, er fordert berufliche Vorbildung'[70] wrote Dr. Käthe Schirmacher in her 1918 treatise *Frauendienstpflicht*, which advocated the training of young girls for their future role: 'Die Körper- und Charakterbildung stelle ich allem voran. Beiden hat jede Garten-, Feld- und Hausarbeit zu dienen; auch der gesamte Turnunterricht.'[71] Offering an early forerunner to Nazi ideology, Schirmacher describes the preparation of women's bodies for motherhood:

> das Land darf von jeder Frau verlangen und verlangt, daß sie gesund und kräftig wird für ihre Mutterpflichten, geschult für ihre Hausfrauenpflichten, geübt im Gehorchen und Befehlen für ihre Erzieherpflichten.[72]

Living under the motto 'Zucht ist Herrschaft'[73] German girls were to flourish in the countryside: 'Denn bei diesen Arbeiten stärkt die Frau alle Organe, die sie als Mutter braucht, bekommt starken Rücken, breites Becken, das gibt leichte Geburten.'[74]

In the atmosphere of war, German propagandists made a particular cult out of the mother figure, slighting the unmaternal image of the French woman in comparison. Writing in 1916 Gertrud Bäumer addressed this purported difference between French and German women with a disparaging assessment of

Parisian fashion:

> Auch sonst betont sie im Wesen ihrer ästhetischen Wirkungen das Sexuelle stärker, als es sich mit dem germanischen Frauentypus verträgt, sowohl gefühlsmäßig wie auch rein körperlich. Die französische Mode ist so eingerichtet, als ob der Mensch ewig jung wäre. Sie hat keine Formen geschaffen für die Matrone, für die sie sich einfach nicht mehr interessiert. Sie verleugnet die Mutter in der Frau, nicht nur jetzt, sondern immer.[75]

While French propaganda was content with the image of femininity and domestication, the Germans were promoting training for motherhood and a 'Dienstzeit' to build up a girl's character and body. 'Wir wollen körperlich gesunde und kräftige Mütter haben, dann werden wir auf solche Kinder hoffen können'[76] was the message from Gräfin Mathilde Pückler in her 'Beitrag zur Frage der weiblichen Dienstpflicht' in 1916, heralding Schirmacher's declaration that the products of such a scheme would safeguard Germany's future: 'so ist der sichere Grund zur Neugeburt des deutschen Volks gelegt'.[77]

Analogies with the woman as domestic warrior and the house as fortress do not disguise the basic message that the woman's patriotic wartime role was as housewife and mother. The news of the mobilization had a negative effect upon the feminist movement in both France and Germany, leading to a hierarchy of values that returned women's issues to the background.

Taken at face value, the positive response to government requests for female labour also returned women to the compliant mode. It was Viviani's plea on 7th August 1914 which encouraged the female population to plough the fields of France:

> Debout, femmes françaises, jeunes enfants, filles et fils de la Patrie.
> Remplacez sur le champ du travail ceux qui sont sur le champ de bataille.
> Préparez-vous à leur montrer, demain, la terre cultivée, les récoltes

> rentrées, les champs ensemencés! Il n'y a pas, dans ces heures graves, de labeur infime. Tout est grand qui sert le pays. Debout! A l'action! A l'oeuvre! Il y aura demain de la gloire pour tout le monde. Vive la République! Vive la France![78]

Again the French relied upon patriotic fervour and 'la substitution de la femme à l'homme fut moins rapide et moins systématique qu'en Allemagne'[79] where women were ushered into the munitions factories under the guidelines of the Hindenburg plan, a dictate from a higher authority which sought to employ the female work-force to further its strategy. Whether the encouragement be emotive or legislative, women on both sides of the border were accepting male directives.

Yet, on both sides of the border, French and German female campaigners enthused over the possibilities which the war offered women to earn public recognition of their equal rights. In a pamphlet of 1914 entitled *Wie können sich die Frauen in der Kriegszeit nützlich machen?* the outbreak of hostilities was interpreted as the moment for the female sex to capitalize upon the recent progress in women's social and educational development:

> Die Zeit der fortgeschrittenen, studierten Frau ist jetzt hereingebrochen! Jetzt wird ihr im weitesten Maße Gelegenheit geboten, ihre selbstbewußte Haltung, die sie in Friedenszeiten gezeigt, zum Vorteile ihrer Mitschwestern zu wahren, jetzt darf sich auch ihr stolzes Wort von der geistigen Ebenbürtigkeit der Frau und ihrer Gleichberechtigung erfüllen![80]

Three years later, French women remained ebullient about their prospects, confident that their wartime response would earn them future recognition as equal, enfranchised citizens:

> Le vote et l'éligibilité des femmes ne seront, demain, qu'un hommage à rendre à cette capacité des femmes reconnue et utilisée pendant la guerre, une marque de confiance que les Français qui auront défendu la patrie par les armes donneront à leurs compagnes qui l'auront défendue par le coeur.[81]

Indeed, when war came it was unprecedented in its scale, drawing men from all walks of life to join - with varying degrees of enthusiasm - in the mechanized destruction of fellow human beings, leaving a gap in the work place which many women were eager to fill. The blunt statistics reveal that women on both sides of the enemy lines kept their respective home fires burning, working in factories, driving tractors and 'manning' public transport in a stalwart demonstration of female ability and flexibility which crossed the traditional margins of gender division. In France the *Association pour l'enrôlement volontaire des Françaises au service de la patrie* and the *Office central de l'activité féminine* helped French women to find work for the duration of the war.[82] 11,000 female employees joined the *PTT* when 18,000 men were sent to the front; by 1917 there were 5,800 women working on the Parisian tramways; and 430,000 women were employed in the armaments industry in 1918.[83] Before the mobilization, women represented approximately 32% of the work force in France. By 1917 that figure had risen to 40%.[84]

In Germany, where women's contribution to the war effort was even more carefully marshalled, the work force witnessed a greater increase in female labour than in France. There was a call for 'Frauendienstpflicht' and the creation of the 'Hindenburg-Programm' of 1916 recruited workers for essential industries and released men for the front. In order to procure the necessary number of employees for the armaments industry, a 'Frauenarbeitszentrale' was established in November 1916 under the leadership of Marie-Elisabeth Lüders, a member of the bourgeois women's movement.[85] In large-scale industries, including mining, the number of female employees rose from 1.6 million in 1913 to 2.3 million in 1918; in the Prussian metal industry there were 87,000 women in 1913, increasing to 462,000 in 1918; and the railways saw their female staff

expand from 10,000 in 1914 to 107,000 by the end of the war, which somewhat overshadowed the 7,000 women working on the French railways. There were 10.8 million women in the German work force in 1913. In 1916 there were 16 million, representing 75% of women of employable age.[86]

Although paid labour was not a new phenomenon for the working-class woman, unprecedented access to jobs in the 'male' domain brought its own sense of emancipation - a feeling of liberation which was most clearly illustrated by the status of the Red Cross nurse. By 1918 70,000 French women were working for one of the three societies of the French Red Cross (the *Société de secours aux blessés militaires*, the *Union des femmes de France* or the *Association des dames françaises*);[87] and of the 250,770 members of the German Red Cross in March 1919 there were 117 988 women.[88]

The role of the Red Cross nurse, which will play a more significant part in the predominantly middle-class setting of the selected fictional texts than that of the working-class factory employee, is beset with its particular ambiguities. In many respects a continuation of the maternal role, the job also brought women into closer physical proximity with a larger number of men than would have been thought appropriate for a bourgeois lady. In her autobiography *Testament of Youth* Vera Brittain recalls her relationship with her patients:

> Short of actually going to bed with them, there was hardly an intimate service that I did not perform for one or another in the course of four years, and I still have reason to be thankful for the knowledge of masculine functioning which the care of them gave me, and for my early release from the sex-inhibitions that even to-day - thanks to the Victorian tradition which up to 1914 dictated that a young woman should know nothing of men but their faces and their clothes until marriage pitchforked her into an incompletely visualised and highly disconcerting intimacy - beset many of my female contemporaries, both married and single.[89]

The profession brought with it new experiences and unexpected liberties and, for many, a sense of importance. In her published diary *Kamerad Schwester*, which relates her work as a nurse on the Western and Eastern fronts, Helene Mierisch notes her joy at receiving her 'wünderschönen Ausweis mit Bild, Samariterzeichen und wundervollem, rotem Stempel' as if she has been given a passport to a new life: 'Ich bin nun endlich auch "wer", habe etwas in der Hand mit Stempeln, und auf diese baue ich!'[90]

While women's respectful compliance in joining the war effort may reflect capitulation to the government's demands, the psychological repercussions which accompanied this change of status went beyond patriarchal guidelines. While the soldiers 'went off to the trenches to be literally and figuratively shattered, the women on the home front literally and figuratively rose to the occasion'.[91] A gulf was created between men stripped of their peace-time identity, giving up their freedom to become part of the military machine, and the women who gained a new sense of identity in their wartime role.

In his review of women's response to the war, entitled *La Paix? oui si les femmes voulaient!*, Fernand Corcos sought to unearth a more sinister aspect to women's war work, looking behind the patriotic response which propaganda sought to promote. While historians have argued that the war could not have continued without female participation on the home front, Corcos regarded this factor not as the saving grace which brought France's victory, but as the kiss of death for the young men in the trenches:

> Les armées de l'avant s'augmentent de toutes les unités qui, à l'arrière, ont des remplaçantes femmes. Et comme plus il y a de soldats plus il y a de tués, c'est l'entrée en scène des femmes qui est responsable de l'augmention des morts masculines.[92]

As Nelly Roussel wrote in 'Guerre à la Guerre', published in *La Mère Educatrice* in 1921:

> L'ouvrière qui "tourne" des obus - et qui du moins, celle-là, a une excuse, l'excuse du pain à gagner! - la bourgeoise qui tricote de chauds vêtements pour les soldats, la grande dame qui fonde ou entretient des "oeuvres" d'assistance, l'infirmière qui soigne les blessés, toutes celles qui rendent la guerre possible, toutes celles qui rendent la guerre *supportable*, sont des complices de guerre.[93]

Far from continuing in their passive, acquiescent role, women now appeared to be conspiring in the carnage rather than simply accepting their fate.

Although women were not considered to be the prime movers in the drama that was unfolding, they were offered minor parts in the patriotic crusades as the symbols of the homeland who gave the men a cause for which to die, or the inspirational heroines who would encourage patriotism in their own sex and shame their men into action. Léon Abensour collects tales of female heroism in his 1917 publication *Les Vaillantes. Héroïnes - Martyres et Remplaçantes* in which women take on administrative roles during the German occupation, and Red Cross nurses come face to face with aggressive German invaders, braving the dangers to care for the wounded. Amongst the personalities whose exploits won them an entry into the pubic domain were the spy Louise de Bettignies, who worked for the French Secret Service until betrayal by a collaborator led to arrest by the Germans in 1915;[94] and Emilienne Moreau, a seventeen-year old girl from Loos, who received the 'croix de guerre' in 1915 for having shot two Germans in order to protect a wounded French soldier.[95]

An oft-repeated account, included in Abensour's text, is the report of two French sisters, married to German pharmacists, who were living in France when war broke out. Having accidentally overheard their husbands' plot to poison the

wine to be sent to the French barracks, the women used the arsenic intended for their countrymen to murder their own spouses: 'Dans ces deux hommes, elles ne voient plus leur beau-frère, leur mari, mais deux étrangers, deux ennemis.'[96] The actions of women which are paraded for approval are presented without any suggestion of moral dilemma. Such characters inhabit a dichotomous world in which the French are virtuous and the Germans the evil villains. In its position as the invaded country, France was fertile ground for women's personal war against the enemy presence, and such tales evidently predominate on one side of the border.

Women became the tools of the propaganda machine, with the Cornelian heroines who appear in the *Journal Officiel* rallying to the flag and proud to see their sons die for the glory of the homeland. There are the valiant women who illustrate Louis Barthou's speech to the 'Comité de Conférences', published in 1917: 'Les femmes que le malheur a frappées, mères, épouses, filles, soeurs, fiancées, restent debout à l'image de la France meurtrie, qui ne peut pas, qui ne veut pas mourir'.[97] They play their part by lifting the morale of the troops, the oft-quoted words of the heroic French woman who comes to Verdun to visit her son's grave providing the popular mixture of tragedy and jingoism:

> "Cinq de mes fils étaient déjà morts dans cette guerre. Je suis venue ici, où il est enterré, pleurer le sixième, mon dernier." [...] La mère se redresse, et, dans un sanglot, elle pousse le cri sublime, que ses morts et son coeur lui inspirent: "Vive la France quand même."[98]

It is an image of patriotic motherhood which relies on empty rhetoric, muffling the true voice of the 'passive' victims whose suffering might undermine the validity of the Cause.

Such propagandist reactions find their echo in the female voice of German

patriotism, which went beyond calm observation and excelled in bellicose rhetoric and bloodthirsty tones. *Aus Heimat und Frieden*, a pamphlet released under the guise of an anonymous 'Deutsches Mädchen', encouraged men to rush into battle: 'Durch - hinein in die Feindebande, wenn sie auch schießt und sticht wie verrückt, wir Frauen streichen euch leise, leise die Wunde wieder zu'.[99] For the benefit of the hesitant she adds the riposte: 'Sterben müssen wir doch alle. Wollt ihr warten, bis ihr in stuffiger Kammer im Federbett ein nichtig klein Menschenleben verhaucht?'[100]

Propaganda played on male insecurities through mockery, or appealed to heroic values. The women who remained at home were addressed as 'stille Heldinnen' and 'Heldenmütter,'[101] who regarded death for the Fatherland as a source of heavenly blessing, rather than a cause for despair: 'Jeder einzelne, der begnadet ist, für dies Höchste zu kämpfen und zu opfern, fühlt sein Dasein auf eine nie erlebte Art geadelt und erhoben.'[102] Early scenes of the gallant hero marching into battle to the accompaniment of his lover's sobs were now superseded by images of women cheering as their male partners went to their deaths.

For the men who opposed the war, female acquiescence appeared to be transformed into female approbation at the rising number of male fatalities. Fernand Corcos translated into French the sentiments of Andreas Latzko, who was surprised by women's smiles as they threw roses at the departing soldiers:

> Mais tu ne sais donc pas qu'il y a des suffragettes qui ont giflé des ministres, incendié des musées, qui se sont laissées ligoter aux réverbères pour le droit de vote, tu entends: pour le droit de vote!... Et pour leurs hommes: non, rien, pas une parole, pas un cri, rien!...[103]

Latzko's attack on the female population was not, however, fully justified.

Although female pacifists formed a beleaguered minority in a period when the international women's movement was sacrificed to the conflict, the efforts of the women who openly resisted the war have now been documented by contemporary historians. The women who did espouse pacifist ideals attempted to reassert the concept of a universal sisterhood in war-torn Europe, crossing both national and supranational barriers in a desire to find a peace settlement. Campaigners particularly recognized that women could capitalize on their forced exclusion from the political and military arena:

> C'est l'intervention féminine qui assurera la paix future, parce que la Femme est au-dessus des conflits masculins parce que la Femme, c'est la MÈRE, le seul médiateur qui soit autorisé à proposer des conditions de paix pour faire cesser les luttes fratricides de ses enfants.[104]

The anti-war campaigners promoted images of pacifist motherhood and of the bonds between women which crossed the frontiers of No Man's land, following on from the work of Elisée Reclus, an important figure in anarchist circles in the 1870s. Reclus had spoken of the brutal sexual force of the man as the origin of patriarchy; and the natural attachment of the child to the mother who suckles it as the origin of matriarchy,[105] this maternal bond purportedly being one of the primary causes of female pacifism.

Yet, even in their defiance of the war, women remained separated in the socialist and bourgeois feminist camps to which they had adhered during the late nineteenth century. Internal wrangling between socialist women and 'women socialists', the latter regarding their sex as irrelevant, removed any hope of a unified female front. Women socialists like Rosa Luxemburg put the class revolution before individual issues, while socialist women demanded immediate sexual equality.[106]

When war broke out initial pacifist action came from a number of socialist women, who refused to join the majority of their male colleagues in support for the government. In France Louise Saumoneau was among the first to reply to Jaurès' appeal to the proletarians of Europe to uphold their solidarity in the face of war. Jaurès' assassination on 31 July may have heralded the end of international socialism, but Saumoneau ignored opposition and carried out a single-handed anti-war campaign, inspired by her belief in the power of female opposition: 'Toutes vous vous dresserez en masse comme une barrière vivante contre la barbarie menaçante et meurtrière.'[107] The splendid isolation in which she worked showed the fallacy of her conviction.

Saumoneau looked for support to the international Socialist movement and found confirmation of her beliefs in the actions of Clara Zetkin who, together with Rosa Luxemburg, was among the four delegates who opposed the war in the German parliament in 1914. When Zetkin made an appeal to socialist women throughout the nations in December 1914, it was Saumoneau who saw to its French publication:

> Tous les jours dans les pays belligérants et neutres des voix de femmes s'élèvent, protestant contre le terrible massacre des peuples, massacre déchaîné par les Etats capitalistes avides de domination universelle.[108]

Ignoring the patriotic response from the party executive of the socialist movement, Clara Zetkin organized a socialist women's conference in Berne from 26 - 28 March 1915, six months before male socialists met at Zimmerwald. Twenty-five delegates from England, Holland, Italy, Poland, Russia, Switzerland and Germany were present, Louise Saumoneau being the sole French representative. Discussions resulted in the drawing up of a peace manifesto of

which around 300,000 copies were distributed throughout Germany.[109] The subsequent appearance of 109 copies of the Berne manifesto in various Parisian cafés led to Saumoneau's arrest and short-term imprisonment in Saint-Lazare.[110]

When the bourgeois feminists followed the Socialist lead with their Congress of the *International Women's Committee for Permanent Peace* at the Hague from 28 April - 1 May 1915, the French response was equally negative. The turnout was somewhat more impressive than at Zetkin's conference, as 1136 women from twelve countries made the journey to Holland, despite opposition from their compatriots and the dangers of wartime travel.[111] However, while twenty-eight German women were present, including the leading campaigners Lida Gustava Heymann and Anita Augsburg, France did not send a single representative.

Reasons for France's non-attendance were offered by French women and witnesses to the event. In a manifesto addressed to the International Women's Committee, the French stated:

> Comment nous serait-il possible, à l'heure actuelle, de nous rencontrer avec les femmes des pays ennemis, pour reprendre avec elles le travail si tragiquement interrompu? [...] Ont-elles protesté contre la violation de la neutralité de la Belgique? Contre les atteintes au droit des gens? Contre les crimes de leur armée et de leur marine? Si leurs voix se sont élévées, c'est trop faiblement pour qu'au délà de nos territoires violés et dévastés, l'écho de leur protestation soit arrivé jusqu'à nous.[112]

Given the German presence on the conference platform, the French felt justified in regarding the meeting as an enemy trap: 'Les Françaises de sang ne pouvaient pas parler en congrès d'une paix qui n'était momentanément pas une paix de l'humanité, mais une paix allemande.'[113] Reporting on the Hague conference, the American delegate Alice Hamilton expressed her sympathy for the French

position:

> It was true that though we found pacifists even in Paris, still the feeling there was on the whole more grimly determined, more immovable, than anywhere else. One can understand why this is so. France has been invaded, the richest part of her country is still in the hands of the conqueror, and her feeling is one of bitter resentment [...] Over and over again I heard people say: "It does not matter what we have to endure if only we can at last free France from the nightmare of a German invasion."[114]

Therefore, without French participation, the delegates drew up a series of resolutions which they conveyed to the warring countries and which have since been compared to Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Point Plan for the League of Nations.[115] The congress also resulted in the formation of the *International Women's Committee for Permanent Peace*.

A group of French women, based in the rue Fondary in Paris, did take up the Hague initiative and founded the French section of the *Comité International des femmes pour la paix permanente*, publishing *Un Devoir urgent pour les femmes* in 1915, a propaganda pamphlet within the boundaries of 'pacificism'[116] which argued for the cessation of the hostilities, attempting to undermine the excuses for war. The text concluded with a number of credible, but ineffectual, 'voeux': '1. Que tous les Governements alliés formulent leurs conditions de paix et les fassent connaître; 2. Que ces Gouvernements ne rejettent pas de parti pris les propositions de paix, faites ou à venir, d'où qu'elles viennent; 3. Que le Gouvernement français soumette celles-ci à l'examen des Chambres, et, par conséquent, au contrôle de l'opinion.'[117] In each case, the women were relying upon the co-operation of the patriarchal government. Powerless themselves, they could only ask and wait and, although their efforts are a tribute to their peace-making resolution, the outcome stresses women's continuing political impotence.

Even the German women who played a significant role in the two women's peace conferences of 1915 were taking an exceptional stance in wartime Germany. The chief participants Clara Zetkin, Anita Augsburg and Lida Gustava Heymann were radical figures within their own country, who met fierce resistance to their actions from the *Bund Deutscher Frauenvereine* (*BDF*), the umbrella organization of all the middle-class groups in the women's movement. Referring to the Hague initiative, the *BDF* considered

> die Propaganda für diesen Kongreß, sowie die Beteiligung daran für unvereinbar mit der vaterländischen Gesinnung und der nationalen Verpflichtung der deutschen Frauenbewegung.[118]

The vast majority of the members of the German women's movement rejected the opportunity for pacifist action on a united feminist front.

The women who did speak out were persecuted for their acts. One of the few French feminists to continue campaigning during the war was the schoolteacher and activist Hélène Brion, who was arrested as a 'défaitiste' in 1917. Writing in her friend's defence, Madeleine Vernet told of the courage - and, sadly, the exceptional nature - of Brion's stance:

> Oui! et il sera beau, un jour dans l'histoire, de pouvoir dire qu'en un temps d'épouvante et de ténèbres; en un temps où tout sombrait dans la nuit; où la vérité était prostituée; où l'hypocrisie était la souveraine maîtresse des individus; où les plus purs sentiments étaient jetés aux quatre vents du ciel; où l'honneur, le courage, la loyauté semblaient disparus de ce monde; où la justice était mise à l'encan; où le veau d'or, nouveau Moloch, s'érigeait tout-puissant sur des monceaux de cadavres humains, - il sera beau de dire qu'une voix de femme a su s'élever dans l'ouragan, malgré tout et contre tous, pour condamner le mal, la haine et le meurtre, - et pour faire entendre aux timides, aux hésitants, à ceux et à celles qui "N'OSENT" pas - qu'il y a un devoir, un devoir impérieux qui s'impose à ceux et à celles qui ont conservé en eux une âme humaine.[119]

The French press responded by using its power to discredit Brion. The victim of a slur campaign, she was depicted 'en costume masculin' in *Le Matin*, as if the wearing of a cycling outfit were sufficient cause to arouse the loathing of the patriotic readership.[120] In her elevation of her friend to martyrdom - a Christ-like figure persecuted by an uncomprehending crowd - Vernet reveals the distinctiveness of Brion's pacifist message and the manner in which the State counteracted those values.

In a statement from her prison cell, Brion attested that her only act of pre-war pacifist propaganda had been her attempt to promote *Die Waffen nieder* by the Austrian winner of the 1905 Nobel Peace Prize Bertha von Suttner, and that her anti-war message was a part of her feminist beliefs:

> Je suis ennemie de la guerre, parce que féministe. La guerre est le triomphe de la force brutale; le féminisme ne peut triompher que par la force morale et la valeur intellectuelle; il y a antinomie absolue entre les deux."[121]

However, her theories met with little response from the women's movement in France. Bemoaning the non-resistant attitude of her contemporaries to the mobilization, the French writer Séverine compared French women unfavourably with the Sabines of Roman times 'se couchant au travers des rails pour empêcher le départ de leurs fils vers l'Abyssinie'.[122] Séverine's criticism of the manner in which patriotic loyalties effaced the possibility of female action against the bloodshed is reflected in Vernet's assessment of women's response to the war: 'Que de fois nous avons souffert de penser que nos soeurs en humanité avaient accepté la guerre sans protestation.'[123]

However, for the mass of women who did not choose to step onto the conference platform and speak words of pacifism, it cannot be said that they

accepted the war with enthusiasm. McMillan points out that in France '*both* the "patriotic" and the "pacifist" camps were in a distinct minority in the country as a whole... To the vast majority, the war was a *fact*, a part of daily existence, something with which people came to terms in a multitude of different ways, including indifference.'[124]

The departure of the traditional breadwinner for the front left many families in abject poverty, prey to the malnutrition, tuberculosis, and rickets which afflicted the home front during the First World War.[125] When non-essential industries closed down at the outbreak of war, women faced mass unemployment. Nor did all the jobs which existed herald a new dawn of sexual equality and personal liberation. French women may have been content to receive increased wages by entering the war industry, but the 430,000 'munitionnettes' employed in 1918 were putting their lives at daily risk; and the suspension of protective factory legislation returned German women to the squalid working conditions they had fought to escape in the nineteenth century:

> Arbeitslosigkeit in den ersten Kriegsjahren, Aufhebung nahezu aller Schutzbestimmungen für Arbeiter und Arbeiterinnen, Arbeitsbedingungen wie in der Frühphase des Industriekapitalismus, Hunger, Not, Krankheit, miserable Wohnverhältnisse und eine enorm hohe Frauenerwerbsquote in den Jahren 1917/18 kennzeichnen die Lage der Mehrzahl der Frauen im Ersten Weltkrieg.[126]

While the statistics which table women's progress in the work place have illustrated the war's significance in the area of gender relations, the mathematical calculations of percentages and averages initially disguise the emotional legacy. Behind the positive images of cheerful 'munitionnettes', serene Red Cross nurses, and a smiling wife 'die Hosen und Schmierstiefel des Mannes anzieht'[127] to bring in the harvest, there are the unseen female victims: pacifists

witnessing the severing of international bonds between women; feminists suffering the flood of patriotic propaganda which promoted 'the woman's place'; and the mothers, wives and children of the 1,327,000 Frenchmen and 2,037,000 Germans[128] who never returned to their families.

Both James McMillan and Françoise Thébaud are among historians who contest the theory that the First World War brought about the 'emancipation of women from their traditional status of inferiority'.[129] Indeed, writing in 1918, Hélène Brion did not regard the four-year period as a watershed, but rather protested against the illogicality of women's continuing secondary status:

> Parce que femme, je suis [...] inférieure de beaucoup à tous les hommes de France et des colonies [...] La loi devrait être logique et ignorer mon existence, lorsqu'il s'agit de sanctions, autant qu'elle l'ignore lorsqu'il s'agit de droits.[130]

It was against this uncertain background of progress and stagnation that the novels which form the focus of this thesis were written, with women emerging from history as both victims and beneficiaries of the war experience. On the one hand they were politically impotent, forced into reactive, rather than proactive, roles and suffering the misery of a war that they had no power to cause; and yet, on the other hand, there were women who enjoyed unfamiliar liberties during the turmoil, benefiting from the immobilization of men in the trenches.

This conflict of interests finds its echo in the three central fictional themes of this thesis: the subjection of women; the challenges to received patriarchal thinking occasioned by wartime gender roles; and the difficulties of transcending traditional gender conflict and allowing female voices to be heard in the social and political arena. The messages which emerge in women's writing may be

traced to the mixed fortunes in women's history in the pre-war era, with the mobilization of 1914 adding a further dimension to the ongoing struggle between patriarchy and feminism. Human suffering collided with opportunism when the grieving mother shared the scene with the liberated 'remplaçante'.

'In a way that the historian cannot hope to emulate, the artist can depict the immensely complex response of women to the demands placed by the war on their fundamental needs and loyalties,'[131] wrote James McMillan. In the following chapters I wish to apply this theory to both French and German writers whose work was produced at the historical crossroads of the First World War.

NOTES

1 See Toril Moi's analysis of the work of Kate Millet in *Sexual/Textual Politics* (London and New York: Methuen, 1985), p.24.

2 Nelly Furman, 'The politics of language: beyond the gender principle?' in *Making a Difference: Feminist Literary Criticism*, edited by Gayle Greene and Coppélia Kahn (London and New York: Methuen, 1985), p.67.

3 Jules Simon and Gustave Simon, *La Femme du Vingtième Siècle* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1892), p.18.

4 J.Joseph-Renaud, *Le Catéchisme féministe* (Paris: Rey, 1910), p.52.

5 *Ibid.*, p.56.

6 *Ibid.*, p.108.

7 Katharine Anthony, *Feminism in Germany and Scandinavia* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1915), p.170.

8 Jean H. Quatert, *Reluctant Feminists in German Social Democracy 1885-1917* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), p.26.

9 *Ibid.*, p.41.

10 For a study of women in French society see Maïte Albistur and Daniel Armogathe, *Histoire du féminisme français du moyen âge à nos jours* (Paris: Editions des femmes, 1977); Jean Larnac, *Histoire de la Littérature féminine en France* (Paris: Editions Kra, 1929); and the five-volume *Histoire des femmes* series, edited by Georges Duby and Michelle Perrot, and published by Plon.

11 For further comment see: Maïte Albistur and Daniel Arogathe, *op.cit.*, p.103; Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Coutivron, *New French Feminisms* (Amherst, The University of Massachusetts Press, 1980), p.3; and James E.McMillan, *Housewife or Harlot: The Place of Women in French Society 1870-1940* (Sussex: Harvester Press, 1981), p.76.

12 Jean Rabaut, *Histoire des féminismes français* (Paris: Stock, 1978), pp.100ff.

13 Jane Slaughter and Robert Kern, *(European Women on the Left*, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1981), p.51. See also Sandra Dijkstra, *Flora Tristan. Feminism in the Age of George Sand* (London: Pluto Press, 1992) and M.Cross and T.Gray, *The Feminism of Flora Tristan* (Oxford: Berg, 1992).

14 Jean H. Quataert, *op.cit.*, p.10.

15 Charles Sowerwine, *Sisters or Citizens? Women and Socialism in France since 1876* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p.6-7.

16 Marilyn J Boxer and Jean H Quataert, *Socialist Women. European Socialist Feminism in the Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries* (New York: Elsevier, 1978), p.76.

17 Charles Sowerwine, *op.cit.*, p.26.

18 Jane Slaughter and Robert Kern, *op.cit.*, p.57.

19 For further details see, in particular, C Sowerwine and C Magnien, *Madeleine Pelletier, une féministe dans l'arène politique* (Paris: Editions Ouvrières, 1992). .

20 Jean H. Quataert, *op.cit.*, p.94.

21 *Ibid.*, p.3.

22 Charles Sowerwine, *op.cit.*, p.88.

23 Louise Saumoneau, *Principes et Action Feministes Socialistes* (Paris: Publications de la Femme Socialiste, 1919), p.5.

24 Charles Sowerwine, *op.cit.*, p.133.

25 Jane Slaughter and Robert Kern, *op.cit.*, p.58.

26 Jean H. Quataert, *op.cit.*, pp.107ff.

27 *Ibid.*, p.70.

28 *Ibid.*, p.110.

29 Jean Rabaut, *op.cit.*, p.182.

30 See the chapter 'Situation des femmes en France vers 1900' in Anne A. Ketchum, *Colette ou la naissance du jour* (Paris: Bibliothèque des Lettres modernes, 1968), p.18.

31 Katharine Anthony, *op.cit.*, p.32.

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CHAPTER TWO

TEXTS AND CONTEXTS

The First World War has been described as a 'literary war' in which progress in the educational sphere allowed 'soldiers to be not merely literate but vigorously literary'.[1] Although similar comments could be made on behalf of the female population, women's literary contribution to the events of 1914-1918 has faced a struggle for recognition. In reading surveys of war literature, the absence of women's own perspectives on an event that destroyed a generation of husbands, sons and lovers cannot fail to excite the curiosity of the feminist critic. Women were eagerly committing their thoughts and visions to paper during and after the First World War, but it becomes clear that many writers who enjoyed appreciable literary success during their lifetime have been consigned to the lower reaches of the archives and subsequently overlooked or purposely ignored.

Therefore, in its study of women who ignored traditional guidelines and offered literary responses to the Great War, this chapter will reintroduce women who have been marginalized in both their choice of profession and fictional theme. Literary women have long been accused of encroaching upon a male literary world in which 'the text's author is a father, a progenitor... whose pen is an instrument of his generative power like his penis.'[2] When women writers of the 1914-1918 period took a further step and presented their perspectives on the

First World War to a society which believed that 'war is man's concern, as birth is woman's', the trespassing laws were broken twice over.[3] Cultural restrictions which barred a woman from bearing a sword, rifle or bayonet in 1914 supposedly precluded her as a serious commentator on the war itself. Deprived of the necessary phallic weaponry - be it biological or military - the female war novelist risked being branded an unarmed invader of male literary terrain.

Consequently, male writers have bequeathed the traditional literary inheritance of the First World War, offering the themes which have added to war's mythology and the powerful and moving descriptions which have continued to arouse emotions in readers throughout the twentieth century. Men have shaped our images of war, forming women's responses in the mouths of their female characters and creating an often uneasy bond between the author and his female protagonists in their roles as mouthpieces of the patriotic message, objects of derision or symbols of peace.

One collection of French short stories for children, the majority of the ten wartime plots deriving jingoistic capital from their setting in Alsace Lorraine, employs a range of heroic female figures. Written by Charles Guyon - 'inspecteur d'Académie honoraire' - *Les Héroïnes de la guerre* is a work of propaganda which intends to inspire young children to admire heroism and hate the Germans. The illustrated stories focus upon brave women who take on the German enemy, either by cunningly avoiding detection in carrying out their patriotic duties, or accepting a face to face confrontation. The third story entitled *Héroïque Franchise* ends with the execution of an old woman by the Germans, but the tales are predominantly optimistic and each concludes with a different moralizing message to the young people of France, such as: 'Rien n'est impossible, même à ceux qui sont faibles et délicats, lorsque leur coeur est

vaillant et animé de l'amour de la patrie.'[4]

In these patriotic narratives the 'weaker sex' finds strength in times of crisis, 'right' prevails with the minimum of difficulty, and a battle is won within the space of a sentence: 'Les Français purent surprendre les Allemands et, après un court mais violent combat, s'emparer de tous leurs canons et faire de nombreux prisonniers.'[5] War is easy for those on the side of justice, and women face up to their patriotic duty without question.

This is not to say, however, that female writers avoided these customary propagandist traps. Women's war writing offers many examples of fictional propaganda, in which the absence of ambiguity or conflict of loyalties creates a Manichean world of which women are the didactic inhabitants. Like Guyon's tales for children, they are often shallow jingoistic outpourings, in which the credibility of the plot is sacrificed in the interests of the moral point. A collection of short stories entitled *Françaises!* by Mme Jack de Bussy - most famous for her wartime stories involving the Red Cross - is a work which exhibits this particular phenomenon. *Le Partant* is a warning tale in which Jeanne refuses to mend her argument with her sweetheart Pierre before he goes to war, despite his plea: 'Je voudrais tant vous revoir!... peut-être avant de mourir.'[6] Jeanne's moment of revelation comes too late, and as she rushes after Pierre to ask forgiveness, the gates close behind the departing soldiers and separate the lovers.

Popular German writers of the period also wished to transmit their edifying utterances. Charlotte Niese (1851-1935)[7] was noted for writing stories with a religious or moral theme, and the war gave free rein to her sermonizing impulses. *Warten* is a cautionary tale in which Frau Koch shows the letters from her son, serving on the front line, to a new but kindly neighbour who 'schnurrt

das R so sonderbar und hat wunderliche, unverständliche Ausdrücke.'[8] The son's lack of 'savoir faire', in which he gives his mother details of the German army's weakness, is matched only by the mother's limited powers of observation as the tenant with the strange accent intently studies the mail and copies down the soldier's address. When the son and his comrades are slaughtered in battle by an enemy evidently privy to their weakness, the poor mother has no understanding of how the 'Verrat' has been perpetrated. It is left to Niese to provide a condescending explanation for her readers:

> Denn die Dummen und die Redseligen werden nicht alle! Warten ist schwer, aber man muß auch den Mund halten können; und das ist fast noch schwerer.[9]

The following tale in the collection advises women to write frequently and cheerfully to the soldiers at the front, and concludes with a wife's future resolution as she glances at her husband's 'Eisernes Kreuz':

> Denn sie wußte nur zu gut, was die tapferen Männer draußen an der Front wert waren. Und nahm sich vor, immer freundliche Briefe und keine Klagen dorthin zu senden.[10]

This propagandist prose operates by closed assertion, limiting the development of character and subject, and appealed in particular to the moralizing instincts of German writers like Dora Duncker (1855-1916), Adele Gerhard (1868-1956), Thea von Harbou (1888-1954) and Marie Madeleine (1881-1944). Their pro-war tales offered fictional manifestations of the images of women manipulated by the press and wartime propaganda. War posters on both sides of the border presented Valkyrie figures urging their men into battle, or promoted female fragility and the necessary mission of the brave warrior to

protect the gentle sex. They were distorted visions of reality, cultivating one-dimensional characters devoid of crises of conscience or moments of reflection.

These patriotic women at home in their supposedly cosy, unseeing world are also the targets of male revulsion, as 'the unmanning terrors of combat lead not just to a generalized sexual anxiety but also to an anger directed specifically against the female, as if the Great War itself were primarily a climactic episode in the battle of the sexes that had already been raging for years.'[11] Siegfried Sassoon's poem 'The Glory of Women' is a famed evocation of the strained relationship between the soldier and the female civilian: 'You love us when we're heroes, home on leave,/Or wounded in a mentionable place[12] - a riposte to the 'White Feather' women who hounded non-uniformed civilian men.

These symbolic female figures are often divested of the powers of communication. The young girl who appears in the theatre poster in Erich Maria Remarque's *Im Westen nichts Neues* is the silent image of peace: 'Seit Jahren jedenfalls haben wir nichts Derartiges gesehen, nichts nur entfernt Derartiges an Heiterkeit, Schönheit und Glück. Das ist der Friede, so muß es sein, spüren wir erregt';[13] and the French women in whose arms the soldiers find comfort speak a language which Paul does not understand: 'Die Worte dieser fremden Sprache, von der ich kaum etwas begreife, sie schläfern mich ein zu einer Stille, in der das Zimmer braun und halb beglänzt verschwimmt und nur das Antlitz über mir lebt und klar ist.'[14]

In *Im Westen nichts Neues* the women have shadowy roles: there is the uncomprehending sister, who greets Paul's tears on his homecoming with the question: 'Was hast du denn?'[15]; the sorrowful Frau Kemmerich, who begs to know the truth of her son's death: 'Ich kann die Ungewißheit nicht ertragen, sag mir, wie es war, und wenn es noch so furchtbar ist';[16] and the mother who sits

by her son's bedside until morning, 'obschon sie Schmerzen hat und sich manchmal krümmt'.[17] In contrast, women's war writing takes the reader behind the traditional sets erected by male authors and poets, allowing those female, often voiceless figures to step out of the wings and articulate their feelings in the silences. Women writers make such peripheral figures the focus of their texts, visualizing their suffering and questioning their motivation.

In Sassoon's vilification of patriotic women, the German mother is a muted figure:

> O German mother dreaming by the fire,
> While you are knitting socks to send your son
> His face is trodden deeper in the mud.[18]

Women writers reveal the content of that dream and express the suffering which plays no part in 'The Glory of Women.' Within the self-imposed limitations of time scale and genre, the works which form the focus of this thesis offer a spectrum of attitudes which range from bellicosity to pacifism, and from acceptance to rejection of patriarchal codes, filling the thematic lacunae in the male literary canon.

The chosen French texts are *La Veillée des armes* by Marcelle Tinayre, *Un Roman civil en 1914* by Lucie Delarue-Mardrus, *...puis il mourut* by Jeanne Landre, and two *Récits de guerre* by Camille Mayran. Reference is also made to *Les Heures longues* by Colette and *Dans le Puits ou la vie inférieure 1915-1917* by Rachilde. These works will be compared and contrasted with the German novels *Kriegsbriefe der Familie Wimmel* by Margarete Böhme, *Der Kriegsfreiwillige* by Helene von Mühlau, *Die Opferschale* by Ida Boy-Ed, *Die unsere Hoffnung sind* by Helene Christaller, and *Töchter der Hekuba* and *Das rote Meer* by Clara Viebig.

All these novelists enjoyed considerable success in the early years of the twentieth century, but only Colette has taken her place in the literary canon, the remaining writers gradually falling into relative obscurity. Their presence has come to light in the work of feminist critics, who have chosen to question the absence of women writers in traditional literary studies and to evaluate the legacy which has been so offhandedly dismissed.

As the majority of the works which form the basis for discussion are now out of print, a brief introduction to the novelists and texts is a necessary prelude to the thematic analysis. As the following chapters will reveal, each novel does not fit conveniently into a designated niche. In this time of transition, the novelists wage ideological conflicts upon their pages, as masculinist values meet the desire for female autonomy, and patriotic fervour is dampened by the reality of the bloodshed. In the following section the texts are discussed in chronological order of publication, so that their ideological stance may be considered against the historical background which framed their public appearance. Moving from the prelude to the war described in Marcelle Tinayre's *La Veillée des armes* to the reality of Germany's defeat in Clara Viebig's *Das rote Meer*, this selection of texts offers responses to the First World War which encapsulate each year of the conflict.

When war broke out in 1914 it was greeted in Europe 'in a spirit of euphoria, even of ecstasy... it promised excitement, fulfilment and escape'.[19] A.J.P. Taylor writes of the momentum of the mobilization, as the troop trains rolled towards the front lines and people took to the streets 'in every capital, crying "to Paris" or "to Berlin"'.[20] There was an apparent sense of unity within

the German and French parliaments, the Social Democrats voting for war credits in the Reichstag and the French 'Union Sacrée' providing 'a patriotic umbrella under which socialists, anarchists, militants and revolutionaries went gaily to war'.[21]

It was this moment which **Marcelle Tinayre** captured in her novel ***La Veillée des armes*** (1915), which focuses firmly upon the mobilization, the ensuing patriotic enthusiasm and the woman's role in the midst of the opening days of the war.

Born Marguerite-Suzanne-Marcelle Chasteau, Marcelle Tinayre (1877-1948) was one of a number of writers who were considered to be champions of the emancipated woman in the early years of the twentieth century. A prolific writer, her more renowned works prior to the First World War included *Avant l'amour*, 1897; *Hellé*, 1899; *La Maison du péché*, 1902; and *La Rebelle*, 1906. The latter novel earned her heroines the reputation as 'Rebelles'[22] who led risqué lifestyles by turn-of-the-century standards.[23]

Although she did not belong to the same androgynous circle as her peer Rachilde, whose personal calling card ('Rachilde, homme de lettres') raised many an eyebrow, Tinayre was assessed as 'plutôt un homme de lettres qu'une femme de lettres; jamais elle n'a songé à se raconter dans un roman; elle ne dénude ni son corps ni son âme'.[24] Contemporary critics regarded Tinayre as something of a feminist, whose work evoked 'le souvenir de la muflerie universelle, de l'exploitation des femmes, de la misère de leur condition'[25] and gained her the accolade as 'sans conteste, par la qualité et la formation du talent, la plus vigoureuse, la plus virile des plumes féminines qui se sont révélées dans ces dernières années'.[26]

This approach comes to the fore in the narration of *La Veillée des armes*,

in which the omniscient narrator suffers from none of the restrictions with which Tinayre imbues her female characters. It is worthy of note that Simone Davesnes, the heroine, is a frail and vulnerable figure with no rebellious traits.

In the preface, written in May 1915, Tinayre is eager to stress the 'truthfulness' of her work, greeting the reader as a fellow compatriot who will acknowledge the accuracy of her writing:

> Aucun de mes livres ne doit moins à l'imagination et ne comporte moins d'artifice littéraire. Je vous l'offre, mes amis, parce que vous pourrez, mieux que personne, y reconnaître la couleur vraie et le son juste que j'ai tâché de lui donner. (*VA*,2-3)

Lack of literary sophistication - an aspect which bedevils other writers in this study - is openly flaunted by Tinayre, as if she felt that 'reality' could be achieved only at the expense of imaginative technique. In following this line, she reflected the comments of Léon Abensour in his preface to a collection of wartime short stories:

> Pendant la guerre, où tant d'âmes se montrent dépouillées des artificielles parures, où tant d'hommes et de femmes ont touché le fond de la souffrance humaine, toute oeuvre serait morte à l'avance qui ne puiserait pas son intérêt dans une réalité quotidienne supérieure à l'imagination de tous les poètes.[27]

Tinayre's confidence in the authenticity of *La Veillée des armes* was rewarded. 'C'est l'histoire vraie de tant de femmes en ce moment que ce récit n'est presque point un roman', was the acknowledgement of a contemporary critic, who subsequently added the significant reservation 'ce qui n'est pas toujours un éloge, comme on pourrait le croire'.[28] Indeed, however praiseworthy the accuracy of her recitation, *La Veillée des armes* is distinguished by an absence of

plot, as the novel relies for substance on differing responses to the tragedy of war, with fictional figures moving against the historical backcloth.

The opening of the narrative on the 31st July 1914 introduces the reader to the early days of the conflict. The first pages describe the initial reactions of the residents of a quiet Parisian street to the rumours of war, with peripheral working-class characters acting as a foil to the bourgeois Davesnes couple introduced in the fourth chapter. The omniscient narrator then focuses attention upon Simone Davesnes's reaction to the mobilization as her husband François, an ex-soldier, prepares to return to the army environment which he holds dear. Tinayre attempts to tackle the psychological estrangement which precedes the physical separation of man and wife, as war-time values conflict with the woman's fears. Simone's struggle to come to terms with her patriotic duty is charted during this two-day period, culminating in her acceptance that she is now 'une petite parcelle de France'.

The tone is by no means blindly militaristic, but it is clear from the introduction that Tinayre is offering a patriotic message which reminds the 1915 reader of the early flood of nationalistic sentiment. By concluding her story with François's departure to the front, the novelist is careful to abandon the action before the first bullets are fired. The limited time-span of forty-eight hours turns the novel into the 'prologue d'un drame immense'(*VA*,158) which sets the scene without addressing the consequences.

Viewing these events from the opposite side of the border was **Helene von Mühlau** (1874-1923), the pseudonym of Hedwig von Mühlenfels, whose first

novel *Beichte einer reinen Törin* appeared in 1905. Her war novel ***Der Kriegsfreiwillige*** of 1915 followed a succession of publications which included *Das Witwenhaus*, 1908; *Das Kätzchen*, 1910; *Nach dem dritten Kind* (*Aus dem Tagebuch einer Offiziersfrau*), 1911; and *Die zweite Generation*, 1914. She produced novels on a regular basis until her death in Berlin in 1923.[29]

The plot of *Der Kriegsfreiwillige* concerns the same struggle between love and patriotism as Tinayre's novel *La Veillée des armes*, the marital bond of the French text echoed in the maternal relationship between the widowed Maria Hiller and her only child Ernst, the titular volunteer for military service. Having found no security in her sexual relationship with a confirmed bachelor, Maria has found consolation in the possessive bond with her son, whom she has raised to be a quiet intellectual, but a 'Muttersöhnchen' (*K*,49) in the eyes of society.

The plot begins in the first month of the war as Maria visits her mother-in-law in eastern Prussia, but finds that discussions on the war remove all hope of solace. She returns to Berlin to watch her lover depart for the front, and then rushes to Ernst's side when she hears of his unhappiness in the army, taking up residence opposite the barracks.

The central conflict of the text is the mother's reaction to the mobilization of her son, as patriotic pride is shaken by fear. However, Helene von Mühlau adds the complexities of a gender conflict, as the young man suffers when military values become the order of the day and he strives to meet the standards of the prevailing masculinist system.

Von Mühlau alternates the narrative perspective between Maria and Ernst and, amongst the texts discussed here, this is the most concerted effort on the part of a woman writer to enter the male world of the soldier. The reader follows Ernst's fluctuating emotions as he undergoes training for the hussars -

despondency when the duties are difficult, elation when he is praised. Ernst's growing maturity as he prepares for war and his new active life conflict with his mother's passive existence, watching and waiting in her room.

Ernst leaves for the front, and the novel comes full circle by concluding with Maria's return to the grandmother's home. As Maria's lover has died on the battlefield, her only hope for the future rests with Ernst's survival. Helene von Mühlau chooses not to contemplate the consequences of Ernst's death by ending the text before he enters the fray, but the novel offers a critical view of war, balancing patriotic duty against personal suffering.

The intensity of *Der Kriegsfreiwillige* contrasts with the broader spectrum of ***Kriegsbriefe der Familie Wimmel*** (1915) by **Margarete Böhme** (née Feddersen). Before her career as a writer of fiction Margarete Böhme (1869-1939) worked as a correspondent for North German and Austrian newspapers and married a one-time newspaper publisher in 1894. After the birth of a daughter, the marriage ended in divorce and she moved to Berlin-Friedenau.[30] She came to the public's attention in 1905 with the publication of *Tagebuch einer Verlorenen*, which sold over 500 000 copies, figures at number eleven in the table of best-selling German novels between 1915-1940[31] and was filmed in 1929. Although she never matched this early success, she continued to write novels for the next twenty years, concluding with *Die Maienschneider* in 1925.

The epistolary format of *Kriegsbriefe der Familie Wimmel* is the most sophisticated structure of the novels discussed in this thesis, allowing ironic juxtaposition of the letters to replace the heavy-handed sermonizing of Marcelle

Tinayre or Helene Christaller. The fictional Wimmel family is the source of a range of reflections on the war, voice being given to both male and female characters, with the extended family affording a variety of outlooks between the 8th August 1914 and the 20th April 1915.

The novel opens and closes with the letters of the pivotal Susanna Wimmel (née Maibaum), a maternal figure with five children who links together the various branches of the family and whose missives from Berlin form approximately a quarter of the text. Correspondence with her sister-in-law Sophie in Altona and sister Johanna Legrand in Hamburg contributes views of life on the home front; niece Ellen Legrand tells of her experiences as a nurse; the Black family in England and the Dorlowsky family in Russia, related by marriage, provide material from the enemy camp which only serves to emphasize German superiority; and the letters from sons and nephews in the army offer observations from the soldier's perspective.

While avoiding authorial intervention in her work, Böhme achieves a healthy disdain for propagandist directives, as the positioning of the letters and ironic treatment of the characters create their own cynical commentary. Although Susanna features prominently in the novel, she is not the voice of reason (that role is assumed by the matriarchal grandmother in her two letters from Bernburg) and is often the unconscious butt of the novelist's humour. A particularly lively tirade against Germany's enemies, 'die die Anstifter dieses furchtbaren Krieges sind, und die dieses Meer von Blut und Tränen über unser friedliebendes Volk brachten' is interrupted by somewhat more mundane matters: 'Hier muß ich abbrechen, denn ich werde eben gerufen, weil der Eiermann da ist, ich schreibe nachher weiter...'(*KW*,55). Böhme is the only writer in this study to make a sustained effort at comedy and, together with bumbling Uncle Thomas, Susanna

provides some of the more farcical turns.

Nevertheless, Böhme does not step outside the boundaries of patriotism. Tragedy is introduced into the novel with the death of Susanna's nephews Heinrich and Ludwig but, as her own three sons survive, the sense of loss remains one step removed. While *Kriegsbriefe der Familie Wimmel* is more candid in its acceptance of the reality of death, the use of the more marginal victims allows the patriotic tone to be maintained until the end.

La Veillée des armes, *Der Kriegsfreiwillige* and *Kriegsbriefe der Familie Wimmel* cover the historical period of the war which has been described as the 'first phase, characterized by the initial war of movement' which lasted until the spring of 1915.[32] German successes at Antwerp, and the Battles of Mons and the Marne provided an adequate background of action for the relatives on the home front to have reason to fly their flags. Although Tinayre, von Mühlau and Böhme may, to a greater or lesser extent, choose to weigh up the cost of the conflict, there is never a sense that the price is too high.

However, as 1915 progressed, trench warfare continued in the West with the battles of Neuve Chapelle and Loos, and the Germans' pioneering use of poison gas on April 22 at the Second Battle of Ypres took the gentlemanly heroism out of combat. By the end of 1915 the French army had suffered 1,961,687 casualties, of which 1,001,271 were killed or missing.[33]

In ***Un Roman civil en 1914*** (henceforth referred to as *Un Roman civil*) **Lucie Delarue-Mardrus** (1880-1945) takes the reader beyond Marcelle Tinayre's initial reaction to the war and into the first months of the conflict. Published in

1916, the novel opens at the time of the mobilization but, unlike *La Veillée des armes*, progresses beyond the initial stages of propagandist fervour and into the reality of death and mutilation, shifting from a war of movement to the stagnation of the trenches.

Lucie Delarue-Mardrus had achieved recognition for her pre-war literary output, which included the novels *Marie fille-mère*, 1909; *Le Roman des six petites filles*, 1909; *L'Archanée*, 1910; *Tout l'amour*, 1911; *La Monnaie de singe*, 1912; *L'Inexpérimentée*, 1912; *Douce moitié*, 1913; and *Un Cancre*, 1914. 'Mme Mardrus qui, contrairement à la plupart des femmes qui écrivent, est en constante progression, marque dans ses romans successifs le même souci de perfectionnement',[34] was the admiring reaction of a contemporary critic.

She also succeeded in adding scandal to her artistic renown ('elle est peintre, sculpteur, musicienne...'),[35] by becoming a prominent figure in lesbian society on the Parisian Left Bank. Her marriage to Dr. Mardrus, translator of *One Thousand and One Nights*, ended in separation in 1900. Gender plays a significant role in *Un Roman civil*, as the story depicts a female-dominated society in which the gender lines are successively drawn and blurred as the men depart for the army.

Events take place in a bourgeois household in Le Havre where Francis Malavent, a young doctor unfit for war service, finds himself left in the company of women while his father and brother go to the front. Notably, Delarue-Mardrus adopts Francis's point of view to relate the tale of his struggle to maintain his manly pride on the home front. In his review of women writers of the early years of the century, Jean Larnac quotes Delarue-Mardrus's claim that: L'esprit géometrique de l'homme [...] n'admettra jamais les remous secrets, inexpliqués, formidables de l'océanique féminin. Il leur faut des raisons.

En demande-t-on aux vagues de la mer?'[36] From the opening pages of the novel it is clear that Francis is a man uncomfortable with the female sex, and his ensuing conversations with the enigmatic Elisabeth Clèves against the backdrop of the ocean serve to emphasize this motif.

The ensuing 'battle' for sexual supremacy takes place against the broader canvas of the first months of the conflict, as the injured soldiers arrive home to be tended by newly-recruited Red Cross nurses. Francis's troubles increase when his hatred for Elisabeth, his grandmother's companion, turns to passion as they treat the wounded at the local hospital. Lucie Delarue-Mardrus was noted for the relative independence of her fictional heroines - 'même dans ses récits les moins bons, il faut admirer le mouvement, l'imagination créatrice, le don d'inventer des héroïnes différentes de soi et de les renouveler'[37] - and in *Un Roman civil* the female protagonist takes emotional control of the situation, coldly rejecting Francis's initial declaration of love.

Further revelations about Elisabeth's long-standing, but secret relationship with Francis's father lead to an eternal triangle with oedipal overtones, as Francis discovers that he is in love with his prospective stepmother. An apparent solution is offered when Elisabeth realizes that it is the younger man whom she really loves, and the father/rival returns home to die of his war wounds to make way for his son. However, unlike Tinayre's work, the novel avoids patriotic bombast. The final scene shows Elisabeth shedding tears for the father, providing a mournful ending which refuses to glorify the soldier's death, or to settle for a conventional 'happy ending'.

It is the era of stagnation in the trenches which forms the backdrop to ***...puis il mourut*** by **Jeanne Landre**, also published in 1916 but focusing on August 1915, one year into the war. A schoolteacher and journalist, Landre (1874-1936) was a founder of the *Ligue des Femmes de Professions Libérales*, as well as pursuing a career in creative writing which earned her the reputation as 'la plus vraie, la plus brutale des peintres du haut-Paris'.[38] Regarded as 'la délicate, de l'école brutale'[39], her work was noted for its harsh tone: 'ce qu'elle faisait n'était pas parfumé à l'eau de rose, nom d'un nom! y avait de la poudre, du salpêtre, du vitriol, et ça mordait'.[40]

The work *...puis il mourut* - described by a contemporary as 'triste à fendre l'âme'[41] - combines letters and narrative to follow the developing relationship between Jacques, a front line soldier, and Raymonde, the 'marraine de guerre' who becomes his correspondent.[42] The first tentative letter on 15th August 1915 turns into a daily missive, which, within the space of a month, is transformed from a gesture of good will into a mutual outpouring of love and sexual desire.

As in *Un Roman civil* we are offered the male point of view, this time in the first person, as Jacques's nine letters provide glimpses into his womanizing past and a perspective on his present life in the trenches. The form of the novel also gives the woman a voice of her own, putting Raymonde in a stronger position than the protagonists of *La Veillée des armes* or *Un Roman civil*. In her seven letters we are presented with a strong-willed, fiercely patriotic divorcee, who writes of both the home front and her sexual inhibitions.

Landre intensifies the atmosphere by skipping over the first fifteen days of their correspondence and transporting the reader from the first letter of introduction to the ensuing passionate outpourings, linking the dispatches with

passages of subjective narrative which offer elucidation on the characters' lives or comment on events.

The structure of the work with its employment of two mutually obsessed protagonists leads to a claustrophobic text which reflects the soldier's confinement in the trenches. There is no sense of physical movement, the work progressing through human emotions but the relationship remaining stagnant because of the male protagonist's immobilisation at the front. Jacques's death on the 24th September 1915 brings the postal love affair to a tragic but inevitable conclusion, for the title of the work has ensured that his demise overshadows the proceedings. In its reliance on the death of the central hero, *...puis il mourut* undermines heroic expectations and turns Raymonde's suffering into the final image of the text.

Female suffering is the central theme of ***Die Opferschale*** by **Ida Boy-Ed**, but despite the fact that this novel was also published in 1916, it retains a patriotic tone more suited to the early months of the conflict than a year which saw the slaughter of Verdun.

The novelist Ida Boy-Ed (1852-1928) was raised in Lübeck in a literary environment as the daughter of Christoph Marquard Ed, who founded the 'Eisenbahn-Zeitung' and counted Hebbel among his acquaintances. After marrying Karl Johann Boy at the age of seventeen and giving birth to four children, her desire for a literary career caused marital strife and she left her husband for a year to move to Berlin. Having asserted her right to become a writer, Ida Boy-Ed returned to her family, pursued her ambition and turned her

home into a cultural meeting place for Lübeck society. The speed of her writing was legendary, leading to over seventy publications and, although she herself admitted: 'Ich habe mein Talent oft prostituieren müssen,' she numbered Thomas Mann amongst her admirers and her work is particularly noted for her 'Einfühlungsvermögen in die seelische und soziale Lage der Frau in verschiedenen Epochen.'[43]

The story focuses on the aristocratic Leuckmer family, with female characters taking centre stage and the ineffectual Graf Leuckmer relegated to a minor role. Drama is created by opening the narrative on 28th June 1914, so that the news of the assassination at Sarajevo disturbs the family's peaceful existence. Further tension is added as Guda Leuckmer, the only daughter, is on the point of marrying Percy Lightstone, the son of an English lord.

The plot involves two love stories. The first half of the novel concentrates upon the relationship between Guda and Percy, as passion conflicts with wartime loyalties. Guda's decision to break her engagement when war is declared, and her ensuing realization that she really loves the lawyer Thomas Steinmann (the epitome of German manhood), provide an outlet for patriotic fervour and anti-English sentiment.

Guda's realization of her national duty allows her tale to make way for the second romantic thread of the novel, involving Graf Leuckmer's daughter-in-law Katharina, whose maternal presence is a guiding force throughout the text. The death of Katharina's womanizing husband, Berthold Leuckmer, offers her the chance of happiness with Ottbert Rüdener, a poor intellectual. However, Ottbert's status as a single parent and lack of social standing create complications for the lovers, as well as providing an opportunity for a discussion of role reversal and patriarchal expectations.

Katharina's position in the novel becomes clear in the final pages as she learns that Ottbert has fallen on the field of battle. Ida Boy-Ed has attempted to create a jingoistic ideal of German woman, who does not flinch however great her personal burden of sorrow - the sacrificial cup of the title being carried by those who have endured the misery of war. Having experienced the death of husband, lover and two brothers in the war before the early months of 1915, Katharina is left to seek consolation in her maternal role, taking care of her own son and Otto's child in a bid to raise Germany's future generation.

Katharina's unquestioning acceptance of her lot and the narrator's explicit partiality lead to an overtly propagandist tone. Like Marcelle Tinayre, Ida Boy-Ed returns to the atmosphere of 1914 to evoke early nationalist emotions in an attempt to soften the impact of the ensuing conflict. Although death on the battlefield enters the plot, it remains part of a 'greater scheme' which will ensure Germany's future.

A yet more extreme form of blinkered patriotism is displayed in ***Die unsere Hoffnung sind*** by **Helene Christaller**, whose substantial literary production between 1902 and 1943 was often inspired by a Christian message and 'ist [...], zumal im protestanischen Bereich, hunderttausenden Lesern helfende Lebenskraft gewesen.'[44]

Born in Darmstadt, Helene Heyer (1872-1953) married the clergyman and writer Erdmann Gottreich Christaller and, during their early married life in various parishes in the Black Forest, she wrote stories for the local children. When her husband was suspended from his ecclesiastical duties after the

appearance of his satirical novel entitled *Prostitution des Geistes* (1901), Helene Christaller turned her literary output into the family income to support her four children with the publication of novels, short stories and biographical studies. Her most successful novel *Gottfried Erdmann und seine Frau* (1908) was reprinted in 1984.

Her novel of 1916 *Die unsere Hoffnung sind* is an attempt to offer spiritual consolation in time of war. Aimed at a young audience, the title refers to the children of Germany, represented in the text by the five young members of the Eberhard family, whose virtuous nature presumably justifies heroic names such as Isolde and Siegfried.

The story, related by an omniscient narrator, begins in the spring of 1914 as the Eberhards take up residence in their new home in the idyllic countryside of Southern Germany. In this patriarchal family, the gender divisions are carefully defined: the father, a sculptor, takes the decisions; the mother passively accepts her fate with its burden of worries; daughter Isolde gives up her education to care for the house and garden, in anticipation of the day when she can accept the maternal role; and the sons dream of war.

At the outbreak of the hostilities, the oldest son Alf departs for the eastern front, allowing a brief perspective on life behind the lines, and the introduction of a sub-plot in which Alf disovers an abandoned Prussian baby whom the German soldiers take into their care. Alf entrusts the infant to his family, enabling Isolde to indulge in surrogate motherhood - and a subsequent, somewhat implausible, chance meeting between Alf and Konrad, the baby's widowed father, brings about a happy reunion. The developing love between Isolde and Konrad is the obvious romantic outcome.

However, as the book is published in 1916, it makes an incongruous

appearance in a country which will witness the massacre at Verdun preceding the slaughter on the Somme. The novel covers the opening months of the conflict without any real sense that the bloodshed has disturbed the Eberhards' existence. Alf is wounded in battle but his injuries are easily healed, and any feelings of despondency are diminished by the news of German victory. The almost fairy-tale atmosphere absurdly contradicts the historical reality, as if the novelist is writing about a land far away rather than working in a Germany which is in its third year of war.

The contrast between Helene Christaller's fairy-tale war and the atmosphere which **Clara Viebig** creates in ***Töchter der Hekuba***, a novel published in the following year, could not be more striking. Viebig's work stands apart in this thesis because of its strong anti-war message, written in the heart of 1917 as the death toll continued to rise.

In contrast to the majority of her female literary contemporaries, Clara Viebig (1860-1952) has aroused the renewed interest of German publishing houses, which have reprinted some of her more notable novels and made her writing more widely available to a late twentieth-century readership.[45] Regarded variously as a Naturalist, an Impressionist and an Expressionist, she published her first work in 1897 at the age of thirty-seven, and thereafter produced on average one novel a year for the next forty years until the advent of National Socialism. Viebig's marriage to the Jewish publisher Fritz Cohn in 1896 'und vor allem der soziale Grundton all ihrer Werke bewirkten, daß es unter dem faschistischen Regime still um die einst so berühmte Erzählerin wurde.'[46] Ostracism under the Nazi regime won her popular post-war status in the newly-founded German

Democratic Republic, for whom she, purportedly against her will, became an 'Objekt des kalten "kulturpolitischen" Krieges.'[47] The message from the SED on her eighty-eighth birthday in 1948 read:

> Wir wünschen Ihnen noch weiterhin die Kraft und die Rüstigkeit, Ihrem Lebensideal eines wahrhaften Humanismus zu dienen, der nur in der Überwindung eines Gesellschaftssystems, das diesem Ideal hindernd im Wege steht, seinen höchsten Ausdruck finden kann.[48]

Aside from the political wranglings, Clara Viebig won particular acclaim for the depiction of her native homeland and as 'die Gestalterin der Mütter und die Frauen'. The two novels which deal specifically with the events of war were later released under the combined title *Mütter und Söhne* and, as they form a unit, the sequel has been included in this thesis, despite its 1920 publication date.

The Greek mythological reference in the title of *Töchter der Hekuba* is somewhat misleading, for this is a work of the twentieth century set in a Berlin suburb. However, the analogy with Hecuba - who loses everything with the death of her son Hector - broaches the universality of the sufferings of war within the limits of a First World War novel. The 'Töchter' are the German women living during the First World War: 'Comme Hécube, elles pleurent leurs fils tombés au champ d'honneur.'[49]

The plot traces the experiences of three families from the late summer of 1915 until the Central Powers' peace offer of 1916. The narrative perspective is from the female-dominated home front, with the central roles taken by the aristocratic Hermione von Voigt, the bourgeois Hedwig Bertholdi, and the working-class Frau Krüger. Clara Viebig is the only writer discussed here who treats working-class characters seriously and with sympathy, rather than as mere anecdotal figures to give breadth to the social comment.

Dominating the novel is the sense of misery and fear as women wait for news from the front. Hedwig Bertholdi has two sons, Heinz and Rudolf, in the army; and Frau Krüger, who parted with her son Gustav in anger after dissuading him from marrying his pregnant girlfriend, waits in vain for news that he is alive. Frau von Voigt is the only mother not to send a son to the front - and the only woman to offer the patriotic platitudes.

As the novel progresses younger female figures enter the frame: Lili, the daughter of Frau von Voigt, whose Italian husband dies in battle, causing her increasing love for Heinz Bertholdi to be fraught with guilt about past loyalties and social propriety; Gertrud Hieselhahn, Krüger's abandoned girlfriend, who struggles against financial hardship to raise her illegitimate baby; Gertrud's landlady, Minka Dombrowski, the wife of a violent man, who makes use of his departure to the front to enjoy a little personal pleasure before her own accidental death; a young girl from the village befriended by Gertrud, Margarete Dietrich, whose sense of loneliness drives her to invent an imaginary lover in the army, and eventually to her incarceration in a mental institution; and Annemarie von Loßberg, who marries Rudolf Bertholdi against his mother's wishes, and whose 'live-for-the moment' philosophy appears to protect her against the trauma. Clara Viebig's novel opens in the midst of the conflict, as war-weariness grips the nation, offering responses which are varied and poignant. Even before the certainty of defeat, *Töchter der Hekuba* conveys feelings of bitterness and disillusionment.

When **Colette** attempts to encapsulate this same period in her wartime

anecdotes, the references to suffering take their place amongst the nationalist musings which characterize the earlier stages of the war. Her commentaries, published first in *Le Matin* during 1914-1917 and then edited into a volume entitled ***Les Heures longues*** in 1917, belong to the patriotic tradition.[50]

Of all the writers in this study, Sidonie-Gabrielle Colette (1873-1954) is the only one whose work has remained continuously in the public domain and who requires no formal introduction. Her first marriage to Henry Gauthier-Villars brought her into the literary profession, when her husband encouraged her to write the 'Claudine' novels and subsequently accepted the accolades by publishing them under his own name. Having escaped this particular marital tie, Colette went on to win acclaim and notoriety in her own right with a long literary career and a scandalous lifestyle.[51]

Before the outbreak of war the appearance of novels like *L'Ingénue libertine* (1909) and *La Vagabonde* (1911) had brought her success, and her journalistic work for *Le Matin* led to a meeting with her second husband Henry de Jouvenel, who was to be mobilized in 1914. Colette's journalistic wartime writings cover the mobilization, Colette's visit to Verdun and her journey to Italy. The autobiographical details, war stories and fictional correspondence with 'mon amie Valentine' offer her patriotic perspectives on the First World War.

In contrast **Rachilde's** ***Dans le Puits ou la vie inférieure 1915-1917***, published in the following year, displays a more telling cynicism which is in keeping with her controversial persona. Taking the androgynous pseudonym Rachilde, Marguerite Eymery (1862-1953) generated respect and notoriety as a

writer. Maurice Barrès gave her the appellation *Mademoiselle Baudelaire*, and the publication of her novel *Monsieur Vénus* 'lui vaut deux ans de prison et 200 francs d'amende'. With her husband Alfred Valette she founded *Mercure de France*, for which she was a literary critic 'd'une manière bien féminine, en exprimant ses haines et ses préférences' and a novelist in her own right of 'des romans où on découvre un romantisme fantastique qu'on pourrait dire désincarné, tant on le devine le résultat d'un pure jeu cérébral.'[52] Even the misogynist critic Bertaut had some respect for Rachilde and her 'don singulier d'imaginer.'[53]

Dans le puits contains a series of reflections upon the events of the First World War, but is presented in the form of anecdotes interspersed with surreal images of 'la dame du puits', who emerges from a watery grave to enter into debates with the narrator on life and death. In her biography of Rachilde Dauphiné claims that the Eymery home had 'sa pièce d'eau, un étang trouble...où la petite fille, dans ses cauchemars, croira voir apparaître plus d'une fois le fantôme d'un noyé'[54] - and it is this nightmare atmosphere which pervades the text. Rachilde offers a view of the 'vie inférieure' which 'remonte et submerge toute marée où surnagent beaucoup plus d'épluchures de cuisine que de panaches tricolore' (*DP*,55). Her 'goût du morbide et de l'invraisemblable',[55] matched with a healthy disdain for the patriotic platitudes, creates an uncomfortable vision of war.

The same year as the publication of Rachilde's *Dans le puits* saw the appearance of a work by a new entrant to the literary profession who was to make a mark upon the wartime critics. Born in Munich, Camille Saint-René

Taillandier (1889-1989) chose the literary pseudonym **Camille Mayran** from a character in the only novel written by her great uncle Taine. Mayran falls into a somewhat different category to the other writers in this study, as she did not have a 'literary past' before the war and her ***Récits de guerre*** was her first major work. However, she is included here because this particular publication is of special interest, having been awarded the Prix du Roman in 1918 - the only work in this study to receive a literary award - and therefore recognition by male-dominated academia. 'Le talent de Mme Camille Mayran est plus volontaire, et à peine féminin, comme sa sensibilité. Mme Mayran n'a pas de charme, mais elle a de la force, de la certitude,' was the critical reaction of her contemporaries, and her *Récits de Guerre* were praised as 'presque la perfection dans la sobriété, une sobriéte à la Mérimée.'[56] After the war she moved in literary circles and counted Paul Claudel, Charles Du Bos and Henri Pourat amongst her friends and admirers. Claudel himself described her as 'le grand écrivain que j'admire et dont je parle toujours comme le meilleur écrivain en prose avec Colette que la France possède actuellement.'[57] Mayran continued to produce essays and historical works, her last publication being a collection of autobiographical reflections entitled *Portrait de ma mère en son grand âge* which appeared in 1980.

The two novellas which make up the volume differ in content from the other French texts discussed in this thesis, as part of the action is situated in the war zones. Both stories employ an omniscient narrator, but events are regarded from the viewpoint of the female protagonists, who witness the German occupation at first hand. The common device of using the outbreak of war to arouse patriotic sentiment is avoided, as the immediate bloodshed and destruction of the invasion leaves no time for valedictory speeches.

The *Histoire de Gotton Conixloo* is a notable exception in this study, as it

is the only tale to portray the death of the female protagonist. Set in Flanders, it analyses feelings of guilt and remorse which are heightened by the advent of war, which takes on an allegorical symbolism beyond the realistic description of the German atrocities.

Gotton, the daughter of a God-fearing widower, falls in love with the local blacksmith Luc Heemskerque, the first man to show her the affection which she lacked during her unhappy childhood. When Luc abandons his own wife and five children to set up home with Gotton in a nearby village, the adulterous relationship brings shame upon the young woman, turning her into a pariah in the pious community.

After three years as an outcast Gotton's inability to conceive a child convinces her that she has been cursed by God, the outbreak of war only increasing her fear of death and damnation. After the German invasion Luc discovers his wife has been murdered and his children have survived - but the possibility of a happy future with Gotton is destroyed by the latter's conviction of her personal guilt. When a German soldier is killed and there is a threat that the invaders will burn the village in retribution, Gotton sees an escape route and the hope of receiving heavenly forgiveness for her sins. Falsely confessing to the crime, she accepts execution by the Germans, her martyrdom granting her rehabilitation in the eyes of the Church, the villagers and her father.

In the second tale *L'Oubliée*, female suffering is of a less public nature. As Adrienne Estier, a nurse in a Parisian hospital, walks home through the Luxembourg Gardens, she has a chance meeting with Denise Huleau, a friend from her school days in Vouziers. Dressed in mourning, unmarried (although supposedly engaged to a Parisian intellectual named Philippe) and accompanied by a little boy, Denise obviously has a sad story to tell. The relation of her tale

is delayed until a meeting the next day - several pages later - in an attempt to arouse the reader's curiosity.

Adrienne's 'point of view' makes way for Denise's story, told mainly in the first person, with Adrienne's interjections and silent thoughts to give additional commentary. Denise talks of her home village under the German occupation, offering the reader an image of life in the war zones. When her fiancé Philippe joins the army, Denise (once a frail and sickly child) is left to care for her dying mother, with dreams of reunion with the man she loves as her only source of happiness. She is later to regret that her thoughts were with Philippe in the hours after her mother's death and, tormented like Gotton Connixloo with a Catholic sense of guilt, comes to believe that the subsequent end to her hope of happiness is justifiable heavenly retribution.

Freed from her filial obligations, Denise makes the difficult journey to Paris to discover not only that Philippe has been wounded, but also that he has forgotten her and married one of the nurses who tended him at the hospital. Abandoned by the man she loved and convinced that she has brought about her own downfall, Denise seeks consolation among the weak, adopting an orphaned boy she met amongst the refugees on her journey and finding comfort in a form of surrogate motherhood. Adrienne, after helping her friend to burn Philippe's letters in a final act of release from the past, leaves Denise alone in the darkness. As in the *Histoire de Gotton Connixloo*, Camille Mayran provides an uncritical view of a Catholic, patriarchal society, in which women are the victims of both traditional expectations and of the war itself. From the vantage point of 1918, war is seen to destroy the lives of its protagonists, either physically or emotionally.

Published in 1920 Clara Viebig's ***Das rote Meer*** acts as a postscript to the events of 1914-18. Her war novel *Töchter der Hekuba* was written during a period of the greatest military uncertainty and leaves the fate of its central protagonists undecided. While this earlier text offers sentiments pertinent to any war situation, the sequel *Das rote Meer* is more firmly rooted in the First World War itself with its specific reference to Germany's approaching defeat. Taking up the threads of the story in the summer of 1917, the narrator neatly ties up the loose ends: Frau Krüger, having made peace with Gertrud, may now seek consolation in her grandson; Gertrud marries the soldier who brought her confirmation of Gustav Krüger's death; Rudolf Bertholdi is killed in action, but Annemarie finds a wealthy industrialist to take care of her and her child; and Lili and Heinz, despite the fact that he has been blinded in battle, are finally united. The only destiny hanging in the balance is that of Germany itself - a defeated country in the throes of revolution.

In the fictional and historical time span between Marcelle Tinayre's *La Veillée des armes* and Clara Viebig's *Das rote Meer* there has been a shift from the initial patriotic fervour to the misery of Germany in defeat. While Tinayre captures the preliminary sense of national unity, Viebig closes the chapter of war with the final stage in which 'war-weariness was universal and in countries facing defeat there is a clear connection between military reserves and disintegration on the home fronts'.[58] There is a chasm between Tinayre's quiet acceptance in 1915 and Viebig's passionate rejection of patriotic ideology in 1920.

It is also evident that these women writers do not belong to an established

literary movement and that their novels do not form an immediately identifiable corpus of work, other than through the criteria imposed for the purposes of this thesis. Although the Left Bank culture drew artists together in the French capital, contemporary critics drew contrasts between the popular French women writers, the critic Bonnefon claiming that between Rachilde and Marcelle Tinayre 'grondent les abîmes qui séparent la poésie éternelle de la prose mortelle,'[59] while the novelists themselves engaged in personal acrimony. Rachilde clashed with Tinayre and another writer named Colette Yver, calling into question 'la médiocrité de leur style, la pauvreté de leur imagination, le conventionnel des situations qu'elles prétendent renouveler par leur point de vue féministe.'[60] The lack of solidarity is further emphasized in Germany, where the writers whose work is considered here were living in diverse parts of the country - Ida Boy-Ed in Lübeck, Helene Christaller in Hessen and Margarete Böhme in Berlin - so that geographical separation further enhanced the apparent lack of common purpose.

However, despite this discernible sense of isolation, closer examination of the texts reveals a range of recurrent ideas. Women writers who took war as a contemporary theme faced a number of tactical decisions, which were not mutually exclusive. They could depict the conflict from their 'peaceful' vantage point on the home front, or they could venture to the trenches in the company of a front-line soldier. The former choice, which was evidently less fraught with danger to credibility, was most frequently adopted by the writers in this study, with the changing names of battlegrounds forming a backcloth, endowing the texts with a sense of historical reality and time scale.

Amongst the range of women's literature published during the war years there are occasional tales of spies, combative confrontations with the enemy and weapon-wielding heroines. Odette Dulac's *La Houille rouge* (1916)[61] is a

particularly epic example, transporting the reader from an abortion clinic in 1894 to follow the abortionist's fate during the war as she becomes 'l'instrument d'une bande pangermaniste, dont le but était la désagrégation sociale'.[62] Yet such adventurous tales are the exception in a literary output which describes a war without visible battle scenes. The novelists of both countries tend to rely on impassioned responses rather than elaborate plots, and on human relationships rather than escapist fantasy. The majority of the women writers have taken their material from the behind-the-scenes experiences of the women on the home front, rather than the headline-grabbing feats of the intrepid few.

In his assessment of French women's writing of the early years of the twentieth century the French critic Jules Bertaut claimed that one emotion dominated their work: 'Neuf fois sur dix, ce sentiment est celui de l'amour. La femme est faite essentiellement pour aimer, c'est là le plus puissant et le plus habituel de ses instincts.'[63] It is evident from the preceding plot summaries that the novels and novellas in this study may be classified as love stories, but that the subject of war no longer appears 'comme un épisode accessoire ou comme un fond de tableau dans l'aventure amoureuse qui occupe le premier plan', as a literary critic wrote in 1916.[64] This particular narrative structure is mocked by Jeanne Landre in *...puis il mourut* when her hero Jacques, who is to die at the end of the novel, claims:

> Enfin ne médisons pas trop de cette guerre. Si l'Europe dévore en ce moment deux cent dix milliards par an et fait trucider, dans le même temps, une douzaine de millions d'hommes, c'est, sans aucun doute, pour que deux étrangers, qui ne se fussent jamais rencontrés sans cela, se cherchent, se trouvent et s'aiment. (*PIM*,129-130)

War has become essential to the plot, while mourning, execution, abandonment

and uncertainty replace the conventional happy ending. Only the short story by Camille Mayran could be considered independent of the historical setting in its conception, but it relies on the German invasion to provide a 'solution' to the tormented life of Gotton, its eponymous heroine.

Jules Bertaut's aforementioned critique of the predictable themes of women's writing, which ascertained that 'une héroïne d'un roman de femme aime toujours quelque part, cela est inévitable',[65] is comprehensively borne out by this selection of novels, while there is no question mark over the sexual orientation of the protagonists. The novelists in this study - including a writer like Lucie Delarue-Mardrus, who was noted for her lesbian heroines - make no attempt to subvert preconceptions of heterosexuality in these particular wartime texts.

It is a central paradox that when writers who might wish to counteract traditional expectations undertake the war novel from the women's perspective, they depict female characters who, unable to take part in the physical reality of the battlefield, are given life in the war story through their relationship to the soldiers at the front. Each woman is known not only by her name, but by a label which defines her in relation to the fighting men: mother, daughter, wife, lover. The French novels tend to concentrate upon sexual interaction, the female protagonists in this study being childless and, with the exception of Simone Davesnes in *La Veillée des armes*, unmarried women. 'Enfin, et cela semble fort curieux: nos femmes de lettres, si elles exaltent l'amour tout court, ignorent l'amour maternelle,' wrote the critic Jean Larnac,[66] and the war novels give some credence to his viewpoint, with the French concentrating upon husbands and lovers, while the German writers attend to the maternal bonds.

In the climate of 1914-18, the words of a female protagonist, whether she

be patriot or pacifist, ring hollow in the wartime plot without that direct link to the bloodshed. Gabriele, the young woman who is to fall in love with the soldier Alf in Helene Christaller's *Die unsere Helden sind*, is chided for her patriotism by an acquaintance who jeers: 'Sie haben ja gar niemand im Feld [...] da sind so feierliche Phrasen billig' (*UH*,203). This fact, which is openly acknowledged by several of the writers, effectively excludes a 'separatist' response which would treat the women's experience as unrelated to the male confrontation with war.

In her analysis of *Women Writing about Men* Jane Miller claims:

> Heroines are not heroes, for ultimately they are judged by their creators, whether they are men or women, and by their readers and critics, according to how and whom they love, for that will be crucial to who they are and what becomes of them.'[67]

This conclusion carries all the more weight in the women's war novel of both France and Germany, where female participation in the plot is linked directly to the destiny of the male protagonists - a fact which is openly acknowledged within the texts by the German writers. In *Kriegsbriefe der Familie Wimmel* Margarete Böhme's heroine Susanna is supported in her claim that:

> Solange man keinen Eigenen an der Front hat, ist der Krieg irgendwo draußen und man selber Zaungast. Aber sobald das eigene Fleisch und Blut im Feuer steht, kommt der Krieg zu einem ins Haus. (*KW*,134)

For the women of Ida Boy-Ed's *Die Opferschale* it is the wounding of their friend Thomas which gives them a personal stake in events:

> War der Krieg nicht bis hierher nur ein furchtbar großes, erhebendes Schauspiel gewesen, dem man aus sicherer Ferne folgte? Mit einemmal schlug seine blutige Hand nach einem Menschen, der ihnen teuer war. Aus fiebernden Zuschauern wurden sie plötzlich Miterleidende. (*DO*,210)

By introducing a front-line soldier into the plot the writers are already responding to the pro-war theory that women are all the poorer if they have no man to offer for the cause. It is important to be able to answer positively to the question: 'Haben Sie auch jemand dabei?'(*K*,42) or 'Sie haben wohl auch jemanden draußen?' (*TdH*,29), for any woman who does not love a soldier is excluded from the female community which stands and waits. The saddest person in Christaller's fictional village of *Die unsere Hoffnung sind* is the 'Hofbäuerin', as 'sie hat keinen einzigen Menschen, um den sie draußen zittern muß, so arm ist sie und so leer sind ihre Hände' (*UH*,212). In *Die Opferschale* the fickle Tiny latches on to Berthold's death: 'Es war der erste Fall in ihrem näheren Kreise. Und sie steigerte sich in eine Art von Mitbetroffenheit hinein - wie viele Frauen in der ersten Zeit des Krieges, wenn sie auch nur lose Beziehungen zu einem der Gefallenen hatten' (*DO*,237-238).

Clara Viebig exploits and subverts this theme in *Töchter der Hekuba*, revealing the dangers of jingoistic ideology upon vulnerable personalities. Such is the pressure to be part of the waiting community that Margarete Dietrich invents a military hero and experiences her own, albeit imaginary, agony. As she has no-one at the front, she creates a fiancé who will give her a proper, respected identity and allow her to partake of the national anxiety. Eventually the lies about her noble soldier grow more complicated, blurring the lines between imagination and reality and creating a fiction within a fiction. Amidst the fever of war, her passionate obsession with romantic images disturbs her mind, leading to an imaginary marriage ceremony with her fictitious groom and, eventually, to incarceration in a mental institution. Evidently a susceptible character in her own right, the effect of the wartime influences upon the isolated and disengaged citizen are her final undoing. Loneliness destroys her at a time when everyone

needs a sense of belonging.

This sub-plot of *Töchter der Hekuba* mirrors the basic premise of Raymonde's story in *...puis il mourut*, where love is also an illusion born of Raymonde's need and Jacques's loneliness: 'Ce qu'il voulait, c'était l'illusion de l'amour, de l'amour venant à lui, tout simplement, tout naïvement' (*PIM*,44). Having no-one at the front, Raymonde is persuaded to take on the role of a 'marraine de guerre' and to care for Jacques 'au moins jusqu'aux heures des réalités' (*PIM*,33) - tacitly admitting that this is a time of fantasy: 'Songez à tout ce que je risque de gâcher si vous ne me trouvez pas selon vos rêves!' (*PIM*,63). Gradually Raymonde becomes infatuated with Jacques's image, just as Margarete is obsessed with her fantasy soldier: 'La vérité est que non seulement je pense uniquement à vous, mais que je ne parle qu'à vous'(*PIM*,104). For Raymonde the illusion is never destroyed by reality as the delusion lives on with Jacques's death: 'Vous garderez de moi un souvenir pieux que nulle réalité n'aura défloré, et rien ne salira notre tendresse parfaite' (*PIM*,244). Landre promotes the element of romance, while Viebig exposes the emptiness. The voice of the mother in *Die unsere Hoffnung sind* claims: 'Arm sind die Mütter und Frauen, die jetzt nichts dem Vaterland zu geben haben'(*UH*,51), and this message is repeated throughout the texts by writers with patriotic flags to wave.

Only Jeanne Landre and Helene von Mühlau make a concerted effort to depict the male experience - Jacques on the front line in *...puis il mourut* and Ernst in the barracks in *Der Kriegsfreiwillige* taking leading roles in their respective novels. Yet Landre often makes the expedient move of refusing to conjure up regular images from the battlefield, relying upon Jacques's excuse:

> On a tellement épuisé la valeur des mots que colossal, gigantesque, infini, ne signifient plus rien; aussi voudrais-je avoir des superlatifs neufs

pour vous dire ce qui se passe ici. (*PIM*,227)

The novelist concentrates upon the developing relationship of the lovers, letting a number of incidents create a backdrop, but careful not to step too often into the trenches.

In general, the fighting itself is notable for its distance and, more importantly, its invisibility in the selected texts. Camille Mayran is the one writer who brings danger to the female civilians by setting her tales during the German invasion. In the *Histoire de Gotton Connixloo* there is the scene of the fleeing women: 'Plusieurs avaient leurs vêtements déchirés et portaient les marques des coups et des larmes sur leurs visages en convulsion' (*GC*,128-129), which is followed by the discovery of the body of Luc's wife, murdered by the soldiers: 'L'expression de ce visage restait absolument étrangère à la hideuse blessure par où s'échappaient les entrailles' (*GC*,133). The episode provides a backdrop to Gotton's inner psychological battle, but is singular in its depiction of the horrors of war encroaching upon civilian territory.

In comparison, the majority of the writers concentrate upon the female-dominated society far from the fighting, offering a contrast to the 'homoerotic' world of the trenches. War is the far-away echo of gunfire or, as Colette writes: 'La guerre? Peut-être, oui, très loin, de l'autre côté de la terre, mais pas ici...' (*LHL*,5). The German writers present this same sense of unreality, of alienation from the events 'outside': 'So ein namenloser Friede liegt hier ausgebreitet, daß man seine Gedanken mit Gewalt dazu bringen muß, an die furchtbare Disharmonie draußen in der Welt zu glauben', claims the narrator of *Der Kriegsfreiwillige*. (*K*,135)

In *Un Roman civil* war comes to the home front only through the newspapers: 'La sanglante réalité, de par la distance, se fait vague comme une

abstraction' (*RC*,258), and the citizens have to be reminded of the gravity of world events and a young girl reprimanded 'parce qu'elle avait parlé de jouer à cache-cache, ce qui ne se fait pas en temps de guerre' (*RC*,115).

Setting her novel on the eve of the war, Tinayre introduces a tranquil Parisian scene beneath a stormy August sky: 'Partout, dans la sécurité pacifique de la cité, se renoue la chaîne des pensées et des actes, et le rythme de la vie, rattachant hier à demain, est si régulier qu'il semble imbrisable...' (*VA*,6) The first mention of war is on a poster announcing a '*Meeting de protestation contre la guerre*' (*VA*,5), as if the war is merely another event in the political calendar. It is this image of the peaceful home front, disturbed by the events of the world outside, which constantly pervades the novels.

Jean Bethke Elshtain's assertion that, 'When women have imagined war itself, however, it has frequently been in abstract, stereotypical tropes that bear little relation to war's realities,'[68] is substantiated by the writers in this study. In *La Veillée des armes* there are the first rumblings of war, but Tinayre relies upon the clichéd shadows and clouds:

> Comme tous les Français, ils avaient pu mesurer le lent envahissement de l'ombre qui pendant trois jours avaient progressé et qui maintenant était au zénith. Une aile obscure planait sur la France, et, dans les nuées orageuses apparaissait, sombre et sanglant, le spectre attendu: la guerre. (*VA*,127)

The bloody reality is evoked by poetic imagery: 'Une corbeille de roses rouges s'étalait sur la nappe comme une flaque de sang et lè parfum, dans l'air alourdi, avait quelque chose de funéraire' (*VA*,249). In war writing red roses became 'an indispensable part of the symbolism of war'[69] and the appearance of the flowers at this moment in Tinayre's text presages the blood that will flow.

In *Die Opferschale* the narrator describes the increasing threat of war as a

dark, menacing presence on the horizon:

> Ein ungeheuerlicher Schatten wuchs am Horizont empor - der Schatten einer Gestalt, der vielleicht selbst mutvoll ins Auge sehen zu müssen, die Völker im voraus erbeben ließ. (*DO*,69)

Ida Boy-Ed is not alone in her metaphorical evocation of the conflict. In Christaller's work the mother's fears for the future are embodied by the black shape of a vulture hovering over the land:

> Unsichtbar schwebte über dem friedlichen Land und den gesegneten Fluren ein schwarzer Raubvogel, wie eine Wolke so groß und drohend, wie Blitz und Donner so furchtbar und vernichtend. Er war bereit, die eisernen Fänge tief ins Fleisch des Heimatlandes zu schlagen, Blutströme wie Wasserquellen zu entfesseln und mit seinem Feueratem Dörfer und Städte zu verbrennen. (*UH*,50)

The mythical bird spreading terror across the land casts a surprisingly forbidding shadow over the blissful lives of the Eberhard family, but the imagery is suitably removed from reality. 'Krieg - wie eine alte Sage aus ferner Zeit' is the admission of the narrator - and one that is in keeping with Christaller's fairytale approach to the war itself (*UH*,50).

Yet, behind the tropes there is a desire to understand and to make sense of a conflict which the writers have glimpsed second-hand. It is a problem which Christaller takes on board in *Die unsere Hoffnung sind* when the young soldier Alf asks his friend to temper his account of life at the front:

> Und sag der Mutter, es gehe mir sehr gut und erzähl nichts, was ihr das Herz schwer machen könnte, so was von Hunger oder Frost. Es ist ja ein Glück, daß die nicht wissen, wie schlimm es manchmal aussieht.(*UH*,100)

Alf's words remind the reader of the difficulties besetting women - and women

writers in particular - as they strive to understand the reality of the soldier's experience.

Helene von Mühlau takes the step of presenting life in the barracks in *Der Kriegsfreiwillige*, but Ernst's experiences remain drill and practice, and death itself is not confronted. When a soldier returns from the front, his story appears incongruous in the cosy surroundings:

> Dann erzählt er von den blutigen Kämpfen bei Dixmuiden. Aber wie er so warm und lebendig hier in der traulichen Küche sitzt und sich die geschmorten Äpfel schmecken läßt, hat man das Gefühl, daß er Geschichten aus längst vergangenen Zeiten erzähle und nicht Episoden aus diesem unseligen Krieg, der immer noch weitertobt und dessen Ende nicht abzusehen ist. (*K*,236)

The same reaction is offered by Lucie Delarue-Mardrus, when contact with the wounded at the hospital still fails to bring home the horror of the sacrifice: 'Mais les blessés sont fatigués et nous aussi, et leurs récits, comme nos soins, tombent vite dans la monotonie' (*RC*,258).

It is not surprising that we learn little of the soldier's experience through the pages of these novels. The returning men are depicted as unwilling or unable to express the truth - a central theme of male First World War literature which has its particular poignancy for women writers. The women's novels emphasize the arduous task for women to cross the chasm between the sexes. In the face of this wall of silence, women's inability to understand the war was not necessarily the result of indifference or callousness - as certain male writers might testify - but arose from the difficulty of comprehending events which the female sex had not witnessed and which the male witnesses themselves could not relate.

As Vera Brittain describes in her autobiography *Testament of Youth*, the outbreak of the First World War divided men and women of the same nation into

opposing camps:

> ...this anguish of drifting apart had begun - or was the explanation to be found in that terrible barrier of knowledge by which war cut off the men who possessed it from the women, who in spite of love that they gave and received, remained in ignorance.[70]

Helene Christaller explicitly raises this issue in *Die unsere Helden sind* with the relationship between Alf and his first love Gabriele, who fears

> ob nicht jetzt eine unüberbrückbare Kluft aufreißt zwischen euch und uns. Ihr werdet von einem Feuer gereinigt und von einem Sturm ohnegleichen nach oben getragen. Wir aber müssen uns mit den Kleinlichkeiten der Alltäglichkeit herumschlagen und bleiben in Niedrigkeit. (*UH*,161-162)

Gabriele's self-effacement and Alf's innocent belief that love will conquer all reflect both Christaller's anti-feminist tendencies and her ingenuous confidence in the power of good over evil: 'Dann macht eure Liebe vollkommen, tief, selbstlos und treu; denn je größer eure Liebe, desto tiefer euer Leid und desto näher uns und unserem Erleben. Da kann dann keine Kluft mehr trennen' (*UH*,162).

In her study of women's war writing in the English language Claire Tylee correctly maintains that this gulf between the fighting soldiers and the peaceful home front has become 'a cliché in criticism of First World War literature'.[71] While male authors idealized, rejected or ignored women in a failure to comprehend the female role, so women novelists were to confront this 'barrier of indescribable experience'[72] in their attempts to offer a response to events.

Yet, while struggling to comprehend the reality of the military conflict, the novelists in this study offered the female vision of war from behind the lines which male writers failed to understand or chose to ignore. The men who went

to the trenches saw patriotic ideals break down on blood-soaked ground. In the safety of the 'home front' women found that old allegiances came under ever closer scrutiny at the same time as the upheaval in gender relations gave them a taste of new-found liberty behind the lines.

Through the creation of fictional relationships between soldiers and female civilians, the writers debate the wider issues of war and peace. Their fiction offers perspectives on women's wartime role, introducing the question of gender and thereby forming an additional ideological battlefront to that defended by non-combatant male writers with pacifist or bellicose tendencies.

In this time of transition, the women's novels which form the basis of this thesis do not fit chronologically or by definition into clearly designated categories or sequential phases. The nationalist spirit of *Die Opferschale* is interspersed with a desire for female autonomy; the attack on traditional gender roles in *Un Roman civil* is balanced by an underlying patriotism; Helene Christaller's publication in 1916 displays a faith in war's justice which is better suited to the ignorant optimism of August 1914 than a year which saw 60,000 soldiers destroyed in one day in the Battle of the Somme; and transcending the questions of patriotism and gender there is the ultimate desire to provide a forum for women's experiences of war and to voice the female tragedy.

While male war novels frequently contain a 'three-part pattern which may be roughly described as anticipation of battle, experience of battle, withdrawl from battle,'[73] women's fiction reveals three distinct themes: traditional sexual difference, the wartime upheaval in gender relations, and the suffering of women. All three themes are present in each of the texts, but the novelist's major focus gives a clue to the ideological tenor of the work: Tinayre places her emphasis on the first theme, Delarue-Mardrus on the second and Viebig on the third, as all

strive to make their own sense out of the tragedy of war.

The prose of the First World War 'experimentally marks out an ideological challenge as each writer was forced to discover a response to "useless" suffering.'[74] It is this issue which will form the debate in the following detailed analysis of the works of French and German women writers whose nascent feminist or anti-feminist tendencies encountered the full force of the patriarchal war machine. The various elements which constitute these war novels - the necessary male/female bond, the subsequent male/female separation and the issues of the propaganda debate - are to be considered in the following chapters. French and German novels will be compared and contrasted both within and across their respective languages in an analysis of the women's responses to war and the fictional legacy born of these issues.

NOTES

1 Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p.157.

2 Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979), p.6.

3 See Judith Kazantzis's preface to *Scars Upon My Heart*, an anthology of women's poetry and verse of the First World War, edited by Catherine Reilly (London: Virago, 1981), p.xxiii.

4 Charles Guyon, *Les Héroïnes de la Guerre* (Paris: Librairie Larousse, 1915), p.10.

5 *Ibid.*, pp.9-10.

6 Jack de Bussy, *Françaises!* (Paris: Eugène Figuière, 1917), p.37.

7 For further biographical details see Gisela Brinker-Gabler, Karola Ludwig and Angela Wöffen, *Lexikon deutschsprachiger Schriftstellerinnen 1840-1945* (München: Deutscher Taschenbuchverlag, 1986), pp.229-230.

8 Charlotte Niese, *Von denen, die daheim geblieben* (Leipzig: Verlag von Fr. Wilh. Grunow, 1915), p.15.

9 *Ibid.*, p.21.

10 *Ibid.*, p.47.

11 Sandra M.Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *No Man's Land. The Place of the Woman Writer in the Twentieth Century*, Volume 2 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989), p.260.

12 Siegfried Sassoon, 'The Glory of Women' in *The Penguin Book of First World War Poetry*, edited by Jon Silkin (London: Penguin Books, 1983), p.132.

13 Erich Maria Remarque, *Im Westen nichts Neues* (London: Methuen Educational Ltd, 1984), p.139.

14 *Ibid.*, p.144.

15 *Ibid.*, p.150.

16 *Ibid.*, p.166.

17 *Ibid.*, p.167.

18 Siegfried Sassoon in *The Penguin Book of First World War Poetry*, *op.cit.*, p.132.

19 Brian Bond, *War and Society in Europe, 1870-1970* (London: Fontana Paperbacks, 1984), p.100.

20 A J P Taylor, *The First World War. An Illustrated History* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Limited, 1966), p.21.

21 Brian Bond, *op.cit.*, p.104.

22 Jean Larnac, *Histoire de la littérature féminine en France* (Paris: Editions Kra, 1929), p.230.

23 A young female factory worker's response to the publication of *La Rebelle* reveals something of Tinayre's reception: 'Ce livre avait fait scandale, et j'ai été très critiquée par mes camarades de travail parce que je l'avais lu. Ce roman parlait de l'emancipation de la femme, et il m'avait beaucoup plu.' Quoted in Anne-Marie Thiesse, *Le Roman du quotidien. Lecteurs et lectures populaires à la Belle Epoque* (Paris: Le Chemin vert, 1984), p.66.

24 See Henriette Charasson's chapter 'La Littérature féminine en France' in *Vingt-cinq Ans de Littérature française, Tableau de la vie littéraire de 1895 à 1920*, Tome II, ed. Eugène Montfort (Paris: Librairie de France, 1925), p.77.

25 Martin-Mamy, *Marcelle Tinayre* (Paris: E. Sansot et Cie, 1909), p.14.

26 *Ibid.*, p.37.

27 See Léon Abensour's preface to *Françaises!*, a collection of short stories by Jack de Bussy, *op.cit.*, p.1.

28 Anne-Marie and Charles Lalo, 'Les Rôles de la femme dans la guerre d'après le roman' published in *Mercure de France*, 16-1-1916, p.259.

29 See the *Deutsches Literatur-Lexikon: Bibliographisches Handbuch*, edited by Wilhlem Koch, zweiter Band (Bern: A. Francke AG Verlag, 1953), p.1788.

30 See the *Literatur Lexikon. Autoren und Werke deutscher Sprache*, edited by Walther Killy, Band 2 (Gütersloh and München: Bertelsmann Lexikon Verlag, 1989), pp.59-60; and Gisela Brinker-Gabler, Karola Ludwig and Angela Wöffen, *op.cit.*, p.36.

31 Donald Ray Richards, *The German Bestseller in the 20th Century 1915-1940* (Berne: Herbert Lang & Co., 1968), p.55.

32 Bond, *op.cit.*, p.100.

33 Peter Vansittart, *Voices from the Great War* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1983), p.88.

34 Henriette Charasson, *op.cit.*, p.74.

35 Jean Larnac, *op.cit.*, p.228.

36 *Ibid.*, p.240.

37 Henriette Charasson, *op.cit.* ,p.74.

38 Jean de Bonnefon, *La Corbeille des roses ou les dames de lettres* (Paris: Bouville et Cie., 1909), pp.163-164.

39 *Ibid.*, p.164.

40 Gabrielle Réval, *La Chaine des Dames* (Paris: C.Crès et Cie., 1924), p.118.

41 *Ibid.*, p.120.

42 Jeanne Landre was to return to this theme with *L'Ecole des marraines* (1917) in which the relationship between Claude Brévin and the soldier Réné Gerville mirrors the plot of ...*puis il mourut*, but forms only one of a number of subplots which centre on the soldier/marraine correspondence.

43 See Walther Killy, *op.cit.*, p.134; and Gisela Brinker-Gabler, Karola Ludwig and Angela Wöffen, *op.cit.*, pp.38-39.

44 For further biographical details see Gisela Brinker-Gabler, Karola Ludwig and Angela Wöffen, *op.cit.*, p.55; and Walther Killy, *op.cit.*, pp.413-414.

45 *Töchter der Hekuba* was reprinted by the Erb Verlag in 1989. All page numbers refer to this edition.

46 H.H.W., *Lausitzer Rundschau*, Görlitz, 1950.

47 In the *Wiesbadener Tagblatt*, 14 July, 1950.

48 *Vorwärts*, 17 July, 1948.

49 See Léon Riegel, *Guerre et littérature* (Paris: Editions Klincksieck, 1978), p.291. Viebig is the only female writer who receives serious consideration in Riegel's study of French, German and English war literature.

50 Colette was to return to the theme of war on a number of occasions. Of particular note are *Mitsou* (1919) and *La Fin de Chéri* (1926).

51 For a biography of Colette see, in particular, *Colette libre et entravée* by Michèle Sarde (Paris: Editions Stock, 1978).

52 Jean Larnac, *op.cit.*, pp.238-239.

53 Jules Bertaut, *La Littérature féminine d'aujourd'hui* (Paris: Libraire des Annales, 1909), p.220.

54 Claude Dauphiné, *Rachilde: femme de lettres 1900* (Paris: Pierre Fanlac, 1985), p.9.

55 Henriette Charasson, *op.cit.*, p.70.

56 *Ibid.*, p.92.

57 See Michio Kurimura, *La Communion des Saints dans l'oeuvre de Paul Claudel* (Tokyo: Librairie-Editions, 1978), pp.303-305.

58 Bond, *op.cit.*, p.101.

59 Jean de Bonnefon, *op.cit.*, p.149.

60 Claude Dauphiné, *op.cit.*, p.74.

61 Odette Dulac, *La Houille rouge* (Paris: E. Figuière, 1916).

62 *Ibid.*, p.80.

63 Jules Bertaut, *op.cit.*, p.302.

64 Anne-Marie and Charles Lalo, 'Les Rôles de la femme dans la guerre d'après le roman' published in *Mercure de France*, 16-1-1916, p.260.

65 Jules Bertaut, *op.cit.*, p.237.

66 Jean Larnac, *op.cit.*, p.232.

67 See Jane Miller, *Women writing about Men* (London: Virago, 1986), p.135.

68 Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Women and War* (Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1987), p.214.

69 Paul Fussell, *op.cit*,. p.243.

70 Vera Brittain, *Testament of Youth* (London: Virago, 1985), p.215.

71 Claire M. Tylee, *The Great War and Women's Consciousness. Images of Militarism and Womanhood in Women's Writings, 1914-1964* (Basingstoke and London: The Macmillan Press, 1990), p.51.

72 Vera Brittain, *op.cit.*, p.143.

73 John Cruickshank, *Variations on Catastrophe* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), pp.96-97.

74 See the Introduction to *The Penguin Book of First World War Prose* edited by Jon Glover and Jon Silkin (London: Penguin Books, 1989), p.13.

PART TWO

CHAPTER THREE

HIERARCHICAL OPPOSITIONS

Patriotic war novels thrive upon the 'gross dichotomizing'[1] observed by Paul Fussell in male war literature, in which the evil enemy is defied by the national hero whose might is right. Women's war writing of the 1914-1918 period reproduces this traditional binary structure, but then sets its focus firmly upon a conflict waged far away from the field of battle. While the most obvious form of opposition is provided by the 'good' and 'bad' armies segregated by no man's land, the gender dichotomy behind the lines comes under even closer scrutiny. The maternal figure in Foringer's Red Cross poster, shrouded in her feminine robes, silently serving the soldiers and her homeland, finds her counterpart here.

Patriarchy as well as patriotism is sustained by a form of crude dichotomy. Asking the question 'Où est-elle?' Hélène Cixous has set out the binary structure which offers women inferior standing in the 'couple':

> Activité/passivité,
> Soleil/Lune,

Culture/Nature,
Jour/Nuit[2]

In her study of relationships Cixous reveals 'la même métaphore: on la suit, elle nous transporte, sous toutes ses figures, partout où s'organise un discours.'[3] This chapter takes that metaphor as its theme, examining the hierarchical oppositions in women's war writing and the consequences for gender relations when the over-simplification of good and evil is augmented by the male/female polarity.

Writing during a period when the classification of women as the 'second sex' acquired fresh impetus from nationalist propaganda, a novelist's reaction to the events of 1914-18 may be gauged by her decision to accept or expose the limitations of patriarchal and patriotic discourse. All the novels in this study exhibit some form of compliance with traditional codes, but the individual responses range from the measured patriotism of Marcelle Tinayre to Clara Viebig's anti-war stance. The nature of the female characters' submission or revolt depends upon the ideological standpoint of the writer and the extent to which she chooses to exploit her text as a medium for propaganda.

After a broad examination of the treatment of war in the selected texts and its effect upon character development, this chapter will proceed to a closer analysis of four French and German works in which the employment of hierarchical oppositions most obviously produces acquiescent women: *La Veillée des armes* by Marcelle Tinayre, *Die Opferschale* by Ida Boy-Ed, *Die unsere Hoffnung sind* by Helene Christaller and Camille Mayran's *Récits de Guerre*.

Unsurprisingly, the novels which generate a mood of capitulation to patriarchal and patriotic standards include the opening stages of the war within the diegesis. Whether written in 1915 or 1918, they reproduce the value system

of the August 1914 propagandists and the feelings of hope and enthusiasm which the months of bloodshed were soon to dampen.

Incorporation of the hackneyed phrases of patriotism is, therefore, the first sign of surrender within a novelist's work, for this is pure imitation of the masculinist style and an echo of the motifs presented by the official propaganda machine. In male war fiction the foe is often an invisible presence, waiting across the wire of no man's land. For the majority of women writers, working in the safety of their homes, the enemy is characterized by even greater distance, remaining the stuff of nightmares or the ugly caricatures conjured up by newspaper articles and government propaganda. Certain writers use the narratorial voice to interrupt the action and add political comment, while others allow their protagonists to carry the message for them, but the message itself remains unoriginal and uninspired.

Marcelle Tinayre's *La Veillée des armes* (1915) offers the clearest example of the novel of quiet resignation, in which the heroine's initial peace-loving tendencies finally submit to nationalist pressures. When the story commences Tinayre sets up a cosy intimacy with her French readership, the references in the narrative to 'nos frontières'(*VA*,188) - a device which Jeanne Landre will employ by alluding to 'nos lignes' in *...puis il mourut* (*PIM*,152) - giving a sense of insularity to the novel and reminding the post-war reader that the writer is addressing a captive audience. The narrator later reiterates the boundaries: 'On prononçait "Nous... chez nous... " comme on n'avàit jamais prononcé ces mots, en leur donnant tout leur sens' (*VA*,190). As Paul Fussell explains: '"We" are all here on this side; "the enemy" is over there. "We" are individuals with names and personal identities; "he" is a mere collective entity. We are visible; he is invisible. We are normal; he is grotesque.'[4] The lines are carefully drawn to

create the first, most obvious, wartime division.

Women writers adopt two approaches to the depiction of the foe: the de-personalized mass and the individual representative whose character is a template for the nation as a whole. In the hours preceding the conflict portrayed in *La Veillée des armes* the enemy firstly takes the shape of a grotesque collective entity, as Tinayre regurgitates the press scaremongering and tales of spies which form part of the mythology about the foe. Tinayre's attitude to the German nation is based on traditional 'anti-Boche' propaganda. She writes bitterly in her authorial commentary of 'la Germanie bardée de fer, brutale et cauteleuse, pédante et vorace' (*VA*,51); and, in a later dialogue between François and Maxime, two military men, she pursues her criticism of the German people by reproducing the well-worn hostile sentiments:

> Ils ne rêvent que puissance matérielle, richesse, domination. Ils méprisent tout ce qui n'est pas allemand. J'ai senti en eux cet étrange mysticisme, ce culte de la force, presque lyrique dans son expression, qui est devenu la maladie mentale, la mégalomanie dont toute leur race est atteinte.
> (*VA*,180-181)

Even when individual Germans enter Tinayre's plot, they remain unattractive caricatures: the servant Lischen reacts to events 'avec la manière insistante et le sans-gêne allemands, ce qui n'allait pas sans une nuance de ridicule' (*VA*,100); and a German colonel proclaims on the eve of the mobilization that 'la guerre est un fléau mais nous avons besoin de colonies!'(*VA*,252). These characters merely serve to confirm the suspicions expressed by the narrator, failing to humanize the enemy and underlining the stereotypes.

However, Tinayre's choice of time scale limits her to the hypothetical opponent who has not yet fired a shot. Novels dealing with later stages of the

conflict find added source material in the purported military atrocities promoted by the propagandists. In her story of the German invasion in the *Histoire de Gotton Connixloo* Camille Mayran initially creates a similarly faceless adversary, relating that 'l'ennemi avait incendié Louvain, Termonde, massacré par centaines des paysans et des bourgeois sur le seuil de leurs maisons' (*GC*,111) and thereafter reminding the reader of the 'récits affreux [...] sur des petits enfants à qui les soldats allemands avaient coupé les mains' (*GC*,116). When Mayran allows a visible enemy to enter the scene, she continues to dehumanize the foe: 'Leurs crânes étroits, leurs petits yeux entre les bourrelets gras des paupières, leurs grosses lèvres, leurs larges épaules annonçaient une race étrangement primitive'(*GC*,124). The theme is repeated in the second tale *L'Oubliée* with Denise's passionate outburst against the invading Germans: 'Ces gens-là marcheraient sur le Christ en croix. Ils détruisent tout ce qu'on aime' (*LO*, 203). As in Tinayre's work, the employment of a gentle heroine to express fervent anti-enemy sentiments gives further force to the words of hatred, which might lose their power in the mouth of a traditional warmonger.

Landre, the only French novelist here to take her story to the front line, uses the soldier's anecdotes from the battle itself to arouse contempt for the enemy. In an early letter to Raymonde, Jacques relates the tale of a comrade 'enseveli jusqu'au cou sur les lèvres de l'entonnoir du côté allemand' who succeeded in escaping after fourteen hours 'bien que nos chevaleresques ennemis rendissent son effort presque irréalisable en tirant sur lui toute la journée' (*PIM*,20). Jacques recalls his comrade's plight for the benefit of Raymonde, but also to inspire the wrath of the French reader:

> Je lui parlai le lendemain matin; il était à moitié fou, pleurait et tremblait. Il n'eut qu'un sursaut de révolte lorsqu'il me dit ces mots, que je vous

> transmet fidèlement dans toute leur truculence: "Ce qui me dégoûtait le plus, c'est que ces salauds-là se foutaient de moi et me balançaient, chaque fois que je gueulais pour qu'on vienne à mon secours, des grenades sur la figure!" (*PIM*,20-21)

Taking an event from beyond her personal range of experience, Landre resorts to the conventional hierarchy in which virtuous French soldiers wage war against cruel German villains.

Interestingly, Lucie Delarue-Mardrus is the only pro-war writer to openly condemn the official propaganda clichés. In *Un Roman civil* Francis and Elisabeth both criticize the newspaper coverage of the war:

> - Parce qu'ils ont une manière de traiter l'ennemi qui déshonore la guerre et la réduit aux mesquineries d'une querelle particulière entre individus grossiers.
> - N'est-ce pas? ... approuva-t-elle. Il y a déjà quelque temps que je le pense. Sans cesse, en lisant ces injures faciles, insipides, adressées aux "Boches", je me répète que nous nous diminuons en diminuant notre ennemi. (*RC*,227)

This conversation serves the double purpose of providing Elisabeth and Francis with one of their first points of agreement, and also explains the absence of typical 'anti-Boche' vocabulary. The novelist economizes upon the pro-war outbursts, but lets thoughts of France's victory be greeted by Elisabeth 'avec un "ah!" de triomphe. Et toute les paroles qu'elle aurait pu dire ne l'aurait pas révélée plus patriotique et vibrante que cette exclamation' (*RC*,167). In order to avoid any possible misconception, the heroine's subsequent reference to Germany's 'mégalomanie collective' (*RC*,228-229) brings the stereotypes back into the arena, leaving no doubt as to her patriotic commitment. The general lack of castigation of the German people is compensated for by the frequent presence of patriotic eulogies, which hint at the approbation of Delarue-Mardrus herself.

Colette uses her war articles as an invitation to her readership to ridicule the Germans' physical attributes. Descriptions of 'l'animal humain prussien ou bavarois, d'un rose porcin, souvent prognathe, le nez court et la lèvre longue, avec de fortes pattes pesantes et lentes...'(*LHL*,112-113) are followed by a sketch of 'le type inévitable de l'Allemand étique, cou d'oiseau, lunettes, poil pauvre et rougeâtre' (*LHL*,149).

While a bond is created between writer and public by inspiring the readers to join in condemnation of the enemy; anger and mockery are consolidated by expressions of national accord. Colette describes the patriotic songs: 'Un soupir unanime les accompagne, ces mots: "Patrie... nos soldats... la France, le drapeau...la gloire..."' (*LHL*,22), and in her own musings from Italy she writes:

> Peu de temps a suffi pour que je ressente, aux heures ambiguës du jour, le mal de n'être qu'une Française détachée de la France, et éloignée de ce qui compte pour elle plus qu'elle-même: son amour, sa patrie, son foyer.
> (*LHL*,117)

Innovation is forgotten as the writers bombard their readership with hyperbole and timeworn sentiments, offering a fictional theme which borrows heavily from propagandist sources and appears sterile in the process. At one point Colette herself alludes to the problem in conversation with her 'amie Valentine', whose husband bemoans the letters he receives at the front: 'Tu me parles tout le temps de la guerre; j'aimerais mieux autre chose [...] En lisant ta lettre du 8, j'avais l'impression d'avoir épousé Joffre' (*LHL*,27). It is obvious that the soldier in the trenches, given his circumstances, would prefer a change of topic, but it is also evident that the woman's choice of war subject leads to the danger of merely imitating the masculine style, rather than creating a voice of her own.

With the exception of Clara Viebig - whose opposition to the war is

treated in more detail in the following chapters - the patriotic German writers follow an equivalent line, with choruses of 'Die Wacht am Rhein' becoming a monotonous leitmotif. Helene Christaller is particularly prone to preaching hollow sermons about German unity through the narratorial voice in *Die unsere Hoffnung sind*:

> Sie fühlten Deutschlands Schmach als ihre Schmach, sein Leid als ihr Leid, seine Erhebung, sein Sieg war ihr Sieg, sein Stolz und Ruhm ihr Ruhm. Nicht der Gedanke, daß ihr armes kleines Glück Schiffbruch erleiden könnte, trieb ihnen die Tränen in die Augen, aber daß Deutschland zerschmettert werden sollte, daß es so gehaßt wurde, das dünkte ihnen ein Schmerz, so unerträglich, daß der Abschied ihrer Lieben dagegen verschwand. (*UH*,61)

These messages of national solidarity find a further outlet in the dialogue, when Frau Eberhard tells her son's friend: 'da ist es mir, als seist du auch ein Sohn, als ob viel liebe Söhne von mir da hinauszögen, und ich empfinde den Schmerz um den einen verhundertfacht' (*UH*,73). That same sentiment is mirrored by the narrator of *La Veillée des armes* in one of a number of direct parallels which exist across the languages: 'Tous ceux qui restaient voyaient en ceux qui partaient des frères et des fils; et les larmes, dans les yeux résignés, n'étaient plus que de la lumière' (*VA*,231). The stock expressions which have their root in political propaganda rather than personal response are common fodder on both sides of the dividing line.

It is with the naming of the foe that the direct comparison between French and German writers falters, for the Germans display little interest in the role of the French as an enemy nation. If France receives any consideration in the novels there is a tendency to regard the country as a figure of fun rather than of fear - more often as the source of women's fashions rather than of danger. This is

a factor which Margarete Böhme uses to comic effect in her *Kriegsbriefe der Familie Wimmel* when Johanna Legrand, Susanna Wimmel's trite sister, writes in panic:

> Wie mag das nur mit der Herbstmode werden? Wo doch aus Paris nichts zu uns reinkommen soll. Ich gestehe, diese Frage macht mir einige Sorge. Woher soll man nun wissen, was schick ist, und was modern ist, und was man tragen kann. Man ist in Modesachen förmlich auf eine Sandbank gesetzt. (*KW*,15)

The German writers make it clear that the French are minor players in the wider scenario and turn their aggression in England's direction. Even given the hesitant patriotism expressed by Helene von Mühlau in *Der Kriegsfreiwillige*, there is no doubt where the real enemy resides:

> Der Haß gegen die Engländer lebt bis ins kleinste Kinderherz des ganzen deutschen Vaterlandes hinein.
> Man freut sich, wenn Russen oder Franzosen Niederlagen erleiden und große Verluste haben. Der kleinste Triumph aber über England löst ungeheuren Jubel aus. (*K*,193)

Following a similar line to Tinayre, Helene von Mühlau interrupts the flow of the story to add commentary on the status of the warring nations, revealing the same uncomfortable tendency to sermonize and direct the reader's response. Political observations come through the narrative voice, with comment and rhetorical questions: 'Die erste Nation der Welt hat sich die Lüge zur Politik gemacht. Ob die Welt das duldet? Ob England sein Ansehen unter den Völkern behaupten wird, wenn dieser gewaltige, unselige Krieg einmal zu Ende ist?' (*K*,194)

Ida Boy-Ed is also blatant in her preferences, personalizing the conflict by introducing an English fiancé and his sister into the Leuckmer household. Percy, the handsome suitor, and his sibling Mildred, who is 'wie ein Wachskopf

rosig und weiß bemalt'(*DO*,20), are produced as repugnant figures who arouse the contempt and wrath of the heroine Katharina: 'In ihnen verkörperte sich ihr ganz England. Und sie haßte es' (*DO*,254). In their pantomime roles, Percy and Mildred represent the worst features of the Manichean world which the patriotic war writers feel obliged to create.

On the Cixousian 'Champ de bataille générale' of sexual conflict, war is waged between the 'Supérieure/Inférieure' oppositions.[5] In women's patriotic writing of 1914-1918 the dichotomies are magnified and glorified, as the battle of the sexes continues the theme of binary oppositions found in the treatment of the invading armies on the French and German border. The decision to duplicate male propaganda in the presentation of the enemy has inevitable repercussions for the presentation of gender roles, for women have a lowly status in traditional war rhetoric. In the phallocentric climate of war itself, the binary hierarchy encompasses the strong/weak ranking of the male/female partnership, in which the combatant male defends his unarmed female companion.

The elevation of the soldier and the relegation of the woman in the male/female couple is a major theme of women's literature of the First World War, in which the decision to adopt a pro-war response affects the power play between the sexes. Writers continue to reproduce the propagandist mood by relying upon the two-dimensional images of the soldier/hero:

> je sais ce que vaut le soldat français devant lequel il faut, pour le bien louer, pour dire son entrain, sa patience, son endurance, sa belle humeur confiante, son héroïsme vainqueur de toutes les épreuves, renoncer aux paroles et fixer notre respect reconnaissant dans la ferveur d'un pieux agenouillement.[6]

By adhering to this idealistic depiction, the majority of the novelists use their

texts to promote fictional equivalents of the war poster images, offering a parade of handsome, courageous heroes eager to march behind their respective flags - and a crowd of deferential women prepared to kneel at their feet.

In his study of male war writing Paul Fussell explains the 'special diction' of war, in which the vocabulary of battle is elevated by an essentially feudal language.[7] Women writers whose work may be categorized under the nationalist umbrella eagerly endorse this form of discourse - a 'Rupert Brooke view of the conflict'[8], in which the battlefield is the setting for courageous exploits rather than butchery.

French writers repeat the standard verbiage which glorifies war as a noble crusade fit only for the brave. Marcelle Tinayre, in particular, responds readily to this adulation of the military figures in *La Veillée des armes*, as both minor and central male protagonists rush eagerly to the call to arms. While the young volunteer Bertrand sets out 'sur la grande route où la victoire chantante allait entraîner, par milliers, les jeunes hommes de France' (*VA*,129), the soldier François quickly dons the mantle of the wartime victor: 'Il était de ceux qui peuvent, à volonté, se passer de sommeil ou de nourriture, sans interrompre leur effort [...]et dorment paisiblement, aux plis de leur manteau, sur la terre nue, tandis que sifflent les balles'(*VA*,168). The enthusiasm of the omniscient narrator is taken up through the voice of François himself, who exclaims: 'Vivre les jours qui vont venir, vivre le combat, l'épreuve, la victoire, poser le pied sur l'ennemi abattu, qu'est-ce que la mort au prix de cette chance? Nos enfants nous envieront notre destin!' (*VA*,181). The theme is renewed later in the novel by his cousin Jean, who declares: 'Brusquement, l'aventure s'offre à moi - la plus magnifique de toutes!'(*VA*,260).

While Tinayre focuses upon the opening stages of this sexual division of

labour, writers who take up the topic at later phases of the war are equally prone to resort to stock images. In Jeanne Landre's semi- epistolary ...*puis il mourut* of 1916 her heroine Raymonde venerates the stoical soldier in her initial fantasy image of Jacques: 'Je ne vous connais pas, et cependant je sais que vous êtes jeune, héroïque et que vous adorez la France'(*PIM*,3). In response, Jacques does not disappoint - 'il eût fait belle figure aux époques de cape et d'épée' (*PIM*,181) - and gladly accepts his mission as Raymonde's champion: 'Qu'au moins j'aie le plaisir d'aller au combat pour défendre ce qu'elle aime et que la défaite lui retirerait'(*PIM*,40). The novelist adopts the propagandist imagery of war favoured by Tinayre, as Jacques's letters tell tales of 'sa nouvelle aventure, la plus merveilleuse, la plus incomparable et, qui sait? peut-être la dernière!' (*PIM*,222).

While Jeanne Landre's hero Jacques becomes 'un accumulateur d'énergie qui ne doit plus penser qu'à agir, oublier de penser'(*PIM*,236), the young soldier Hillemann, on the opposite side of the enemy lines in *Die Opferschale*, claims that 'er käme sich vor wie ein Akkumulator, der nicht arbeiten dürfe, oder wie ein angekurbeltes Auto, das noch stillstehen müsse' (*DO*,112). His creator Ida Boy-Ed revels in such heroic figures, constantly relying upon hackneyed vocabulary. Thomas Steinmann - the epitome of German manhood - has 'etwas Siegfriedhaftes'(*DO*,6), while his comrades in arms are full of bellicose sentiments and courage: 'Und um ihren jungen Mund ging eine neue Linie. Wie von einem Eisenstift schien sie hineingezogen. So fest sprach sie von Entschlossenheit und hohem Mut' (*DO*,142-143).

However, Helene Christaller rivals her contemporary Ida Boy-Ed in the employment of clichés. In the fairy-tale atmosphere of *Die unsere Helden sind* the officer Konrad is 'schlank und groß gewachsen, mit federnden Muskeln. In den

blauen Augen lag ruhige Entschlossenheit und ein stählerner Wille'(*UH*,191); and the young soldier Alf is 'ein hübscher, treuherziger Junge [...] gewiß einer von denen, die "Deutschland, Deutschland über alles" singen und sich so in Schlacht und Tod stürzen, um das Grauen zu überwinden' (*UH*,170). The same spirit of adventure which grips the heroes of the French texts is to smite Alf when he departs for the front: 'mir ist zumut wie von einer interessanten, etwas gefahrvollen Reise; mir prickelt's in allen Gliedern vor Tatenlust und Abenteuerfreude'(*UH*,73). This vehemence is offered by the protagonists in all sincerity - the reader is not to take these words as ironic utterances.

The military figures who receive particular adulation are the pilots, and several writers choose to incorporate an aviator amongst their personnel, although for different motives. Clara Viebig, as we shall see at a later stage, concentrates upon the danger - a fact which is dismissed by Böhme's pilot Hermann in *Kriegsbriefe der Familie Wimmel* when he writes: 'Im Kriege gibt es keinen mehr oder minder gefährlichen Posten. Alles ist Kismet, Fatum' (*KW*,28). Yet even Viebig falls for the romanticism of the job, allowing Heinz to risk his life on dangerous missions only when he is rejected in love. As Lili is to ponder when she hears the news of Heinz's exploits: 'Flieger, Flieger! Was hatte ihn dazu getrieben? *Sie* vielleicht? Um Gottes willen: sie?!' (*TdH*,168).

Less surprisingly, Tinayre is attracted by the glamour. In the first phases of the war described in *La Veillée des armes*, the planes built at François' factory take on an almost mythical status:

> ils s'envoleraient bientôt sur de vrais champs de bataille, escortés de vrais shrapnells, avec la mort, la glorieuse mort, assise à côté du pilote et le vent de la victoire dans leurs ailes. (*VA*,198)

Colette, viewing events from near Verdun, also follows a similar tack in her description of the planes flying over the frontier: 'Ils gravissent le ciel en spirales, montrent au soleil leurs ventres clairs, les trois couleurs de leur queue, leurs plans aux lignes droites...' (*LHL*,46), and when the German planes come to attack 'nos canons fleurissent l'azur de roses blanches...' (*LHL*,46). There is fantasy rather than death in the air as the pilots rise above the battlefields, freed from the immobilization of the trenches. While the war stagnated on the ground, there was an enhanced fascination about this fresh form of combat and an allure about the men who took the risks.

The raising of military men to heroic status by the narrators is underlined by the open admiration of the fictional female characters. Jubilant arrival and departure scenes are particularly popular in the German texts, and Helene von Mühlau allows Ernst his moment of glory in *Der Kriegsfreiwillige* as the recruits receive female adulation: 'Und alle Frauen vergötterten sie, alles faßte sie mit Glacéhandschuhen an' (*K*,63); Heinrich Maibaum has the same story to relate in *Kriegsbriefe* when he writes to his parents: 'Wir wurden unglaublich verhätschelt. Auf jeder Station schleppten Damen große Körbe mit belegten Brötchen, Kuchen, Würstchen, Schokolade und anderen Eßwaren heran. [...] Und überall wurden wir mit einer Begeisterung begrüßt, daß man sich fast der *a conto* eingeheimsten Lorbeeren schämte' (*KW*,120); and when Alf returns home in *Die unsere Hoffnung sind* the villagers rush to honour him: 'Die Dorfmädchen äugten und flüsterten sich schmeichelhafte Bemerkungen über ihn zu, die Buben zogen in langem Schwanz ihm nach und lauerten auf ein Wort, das sie erhaschen konnten' (*UH*,153). His sweetheart Gabriele's reaction is typical of the fictional female response: 'Ihr seid Helden, alle, im Tun und im Ertragen. Wir werden euch nie genug ehren können' (*UH*,160). In their meek and subordinate role female

characters are called upon to acknowledge, by word and deed, the superiority of the male sex. Katharina's response in *Die Opferschale*: 'Auch durch ihr ganz und gar frauenhaftes Wesen ging jetzt manchmal ein Wünschen: wär' ich ein Mann!' (*DO*,128) and Isolde's lament in *Unsere Hoffnung sind*: 'Ich wollt, ich wäre ein Mann und könnte große Taten tun!' (*UH*,76) confirm the gender hierarchy and evoke Vera Brittain's exclamation in the early stages of the conflict: 'Women get all the dreariness of war, and none of its exhilaration'.[9]

The soldier's uniform marks out the elite and there are several transformation scenes - relished by patriotic German writers - in which boys mature into men, and men become god-like figures before whom the non-combatant female must bow in simple adoration. Dressed for war, Helene Christaller's hero Alf appears 'jung und begeistert, schön wie ein griechischer Jüngling' (*UH*,68); Susanna Wimmel, unimpressed by her future son-in-law's civilian appearance, writes in *Kriegsbriefe der Familie Wimmel* that she is won over by the man who stands 'schlank und prächtig wie ein junger Kriegsgott in der Uniform' (*KW*,8); in *Die Opferschale* Katharina is full of admiration for her lover Ottbert: 'Ihr Frauenherz erlag einer kurzen Anwandlung weiblichster Schwäche - wie kleidsam war der ernsten Erscheinung des geliebten Mannes der graue Rock' (*DO*,335); and Maria is conscious of the metamorphosis of her weakling son in Der *Kriegsfreiwillige*: 'Der schwergefütterte graue Mantel, der mächtige Falten schlägt, macht aus dem schlanken Jungen eine Kolossalfigur' (*K*,287). Even Clara Viebig, who exposes the vast majority of the wartime platitudes, chooses to lend Heinz and Rudolf Bertholdi the archetypal heroic standing in *Töchter der Hekuba*: 'das waren Männer, breitschultrig bei aller Schlankheit, kräftig und sich ihrer Kraft bewußt' (*TdH*,88) - both suitable figures for wartime propaganda. Before exploding the mythology, she firstly

subscribes to traditional typecasting.

The pro-war novelists depict a world in which pacifism is equated with weakness and the uniform is regarded as the outer sign of machismo:

> Dans la guerre, toute femme aime surtout le guerrier. Dans le guerrier elle aime les qualités mâles portées au suprême degré; aussi elle aime tout en lui, naïvement, depuis l'uniforme martial jusqu'aux manifestations plus profondes de la force et de l'héroisme.[10]

At the sight of François in his uniform in *La Veillée des armes* Simone has 'la sensation exaltante de l'admiration dans l'amour. Celui-là, qu'elle aimait et qui l'avait choisie, celui-là, c'était un homme!' (*VA*, 281). This exaggeration of customary male characteristics inevitably rebounds upon the female protagonists, increasing the chasm between the soldier and his wife, and confirming women's secondary status in the sexual hierarchy.

In her introduction to an analysis of images of women in war and peace, Sharon MacDonald points out: 'In a world in which gender is a principal articulator of the social order, and in which it is men who wage war, women may take on a particular objectified importance as the "protected", or even as the custodians of the social values that the men are fighting for.'[11] Female characters become the weak and fragile figures for whom the male warrior must risk his life, or the symbols of the distant homeland which hearten the soldier as he marches into battle.

Through the eyes of the male protagonists, women are subjected to propagandist stereotyping, often with the apparent approval of the writer. In *Un Roman civil* Francis's initial hatred of Elisabeth Clèves is tempered by his realization that 'elle était la France, elle aussi!' (*RC*,52). In a similar way, Christaller's protagonist Isolde fulfils her patriotic duty as an inspiration to the

lonely German soldier at the front: 'Wenn wir so im Feld sind, da flüchten wir uns oft innerlich zu allem, was uns lieb ist; da warst du mir immer die Heimat, bei der ich ausruhte' (*UH*,116).

Raymonde is honoured by Jacques in ...*puis il mourut*: 'Ah! comme elle était Française! Comme son âme était généreuse, son coeur magnifique, comme ses goûts étaient purs et son intelligence lumineuse!' (*PIM*,97), just as the soldier Peterchen in *Die unsere Hoffnung sind* looks to his friend Isolde as the example of German womanhood: 'das liebe Mädchen, dessen Bild fest in seinem Herzen lebte als Schwester, als Freundin, als der Inbegriff der deutschen Frau' (*UH*,110).

Female characters are swept up in the flood of hackneyed propaganda, but restrained within archetypally 'feminine' roles. Ida Boy-Ed turns to mythological figures with traditional concrete forms by presenting Katharina Leuckmer as 'eine ins Schlanke herabgemilderte Germania'(*DO*,20) or 'eine Ceres, blond, in reifer Weiblichkeit, doch jung und froh, ein Mensch, der Segen bringt...' (*DO*,64) - the latter image, ironically, being appropriated by Marcelle Tinayre for her character Madame Anselme, who is a 'Cérès mûre' for the harvest on the French side of the border (*VA*,137). In attempting to increase the status of their subject, women writers have paradoxically subjugated the female figures by relying upon the shallow, unoriginal images befitting government propaganda.

The writers are in sympathy with the vast majority of their sisters in the women's movement when they reject the wartime situation as an opportunity for overtly feminist spokeswomen. The narrator of Ida Boy-Ed's *Die Opferschale* reminds the reader that this is the moment when women must be transported 'über ganze Strecken ihrer Entwicklung und ihrer Kämpfe hinweg - fort von

irreführenden Wegen, vorbei an falschen Zielen' and raised up 'auf den Thron der reinen Weiblichkeit' (*DO*,258).

It is in this context that the figure of the nurse in Foringer's poster makes her first modest appearance as a servant of the propaganda machine:

> Le sourire de l'infirmière française aura bien servi la défense nationale, mais je le dis surtout en pensant au lendemain de la guerre, il aura bien servi aussi l'unité nationale. Quelle rancunes il aura apaisées! Quelles jalousies il aura éteintes! Quels préjugés il aura vaincus![12]

This is 'woman' as a nationalist tool, soothing and consoling the male in her traditional maternal role. The writers who attempt to restrain the female sex within age-old boundaries strive to package the nurse's status in conventional patriarchal vocabulary. Marcelle Capy disparages the Red Cross nurse in her virginal uniform and pearl earrings as the 'grande dame qui joue à l'ange'[13] - but this is the part which satisfies the war propagandists.

Patriotic writers succeed in containing women within accepted guidelines. Colette's respect for the nursing profession is an addendum to her tribute to French male heroism:

> Je n'ai pas encore rencontré d'infirmières neurasthéniques. Le secret de leur sérénité ne tient peut-être pas tout entier dans le don total qu'elles font de leur activité physique et morale. Peut-être leur optimisme s'alimente-t-il à celui des blessés - car je n'ai pas non plus rencontré de blessés neurasthéniques. (*LHL*,18)

Christaller adopts a similar approach in *Die unsere Hoffnung sind* when the nurses who attend to Alf receive a positive welcome from the soldiers as a symbol of the caring Fatherland: 'Und doch sind diese lieben, gütigen, schönen Mädchen hier für uns das Beste von all dem Guten, was uns geboten wurde' (*UH*,146).

Working within patriarchal boundaries, Christaller draws attention to the gender hierarchy when one nurse responds to a soldier's gratitude with a display of female inferiority: 'Ach, es ist ja so schrecklich wenig, was wir tun können; wenn ich dagegen denke, was Sie alles ausgehalten haben, da schäme ich mich ordentlich, ein Mädchen zu sein'. (*UH*,146).

As we shall see in the following chapter, the nurse is a multifaceted figure and her inclusion in the text is part of an intriguing power game played out when wounded men become the victims. However, in the first stage she remains a harmless character, adhering to the accepted 'feminine' characteristics and representing the gentle, maternal, submissive being with whom patriarchy is contented.

From the outset, therefore, images of female subservience constantly invade the pages of the patriotic novels, as the texts are dominated by the 'essentialist' view of the sexes in which courageous soldiers are honoured by fearful, passive women. In the selected French texts jaded oppositions of master/servant and teacher/pupil operate with particular regularity. While Simone regards François as 'son maître et son initiateur' in *La Veillée des armes* (*VA*,162), Raymonde addresses Jacques as 'mon cher professeur' in *...puis il mourut* (*PIM*,62); Elisabeth Clèves seeks a father-figure in Malavent to replace the deceased father 'qui m'a élevée et instruite' (*RC*,219) in *Un Roman civil*; and the father takes comfort in his authority over his eponymous daughter Gotton Connixloo with the assumption: 'Je peux briser net en lui montrant que je suis le maître' (*GC*,48).

The narrator of *La Veillée des armes* is evidently conscious of Simone's occasional servile role, exonerating the heroine's behaviour with the apologetic generalization that 'il n'est pas de femme éprise qui ne souhaite servir celui

qu'elle adore' (*VA*,44) - a technique which Camille Mayran adopts when she excuses Gotton Connixloo's subservient demeanour by contrasting life with a violent father to 'cette soumission amoureuse' with Luc (*GC*,70). When Gotton, who initially accepts the law of the father 'en silence comme la pluie, le vent, le long hiver'(*GC*,21), runs away from home in a fairytale scene of escape ('Gotton fit tourner deux fois la clef rouillée dans la serrure et tira le loquet de fer avec la sensation que, dans cette seconde, tenait tout son destin' (*GC*,54)), she evades one tyrannical lord only to hand herself over to a second master with the words: 'Luc Heemskerque, qu'il en soit de moi pour toutes choses maintenant selon ton plaisir' *(GC*,62).

Concentration upon one intimate bond increases the sense of confinement in the French texts, a factor which is most marked in Jeanne Landre's claustrophobic ...*puis il mourut*, when the intimate thoughts and emotions of the soldier and his 'marraine de guerre' monopolize the work. Although Jeanne Landre gives equal importance to her two protagonists, reiterating the parallel nature of their mutual need and offering the woman parity of expression in the semi-epistolary format, many of the devices employed to convey the woman's passion relegate her to the role of Jacques's 'tendre esclave' (*PIM*,37) rather than his emotional peer.

At the outset Raymonde controls the written relationship with Jacques, but quickly submits to 'l'obsession grisante de se croire sienne pour toujours' (*PIM*,32). The free spirit who greets the soldier in their first written communication is soon dependent upon traditional modes of expression in which she confesses that 'pour une femme qui a tant parlé de prudence, j'ai une étrange façon de me livrer, pieds et poings liés, à mon adversaire' (*PIM*,60-61).

In allowing Raymonde's subjugation in the (albeit hypothetical) sexual

relationship, Jeanne Landre lends support to Irigaray's claim that women have 'lacked a position from which to counter or derail male-centred conceptions of both sexes' as a result of 'millennia of cultural subordination of women's bodies and their sexuality to the needs and fantasies of men'.[14] In *...puis il mourut* the intensity of the couple's sexual reveries is conveyed by conventional images of female humiliation and theoretical male power, as the independent Raymonde is transformed into the sexual object whose stockings and suspenders are the inspiration for Jacques's flights of fancy. Although the soldier trapped in the trenches is also caught up in the sexual power game, it is Raymonde who primarily panders to the imaginary male gaze when she finds herself beautiful 'grâce à lui et pour lui' (*PIM*,34), manipulating her charms to hold his attention: 'Je n'ignore plus rien, ni comment l'on peut rester belle, ni comment la volupté peut s'éterniser' (*PIM*,174).

In taking this approach, Landre imitates the exaggerated images of femininity constructed to awaken male fantasy which Colette describes in *Les Heures longues*. Relating an anecdote by a serving soldier, Colette describes the man's ideal concept of 'woman' as painted by a comrade:

> Il enlumine avec amour un sujet toujours le même: une grasse beauté, couchée sur des nues, se drape tantôt d'une gaze, tantôt d'une guirlande, parfois d'un éventail et d'un collier. Il peint *La Femme*, mirage, espoir, souvenir magnifique, tourment et réconfort de toutes les heures.
> (*LHL*,74-75)

This is 'woman' as sexual object, adorned to attract the male gaze, reverting to the passive stereotyping which women's active role in the war effort sought to undercut.

In *...puis il mourut* Jacques persuades Raymonde: 'pendant ce temps faites-vous belle et désirable pour le retour du vainqueur' (*PIM*,78) for after the battle

she would become the conquering hero's 'superbe compensation' (*PIM*,98). Most sinister of all is Raymonde's reaction to the fear that Jacques will abandon her when the war is over. Initially the narrator suggests self-abnegation: 'Après la victoire, s'il le fallait, elle rentrerait dans l'ombre, car elle préférait l'abnégation de son espérance à ce qui eût entraîné la désillusion du soldat triomphant' (*PIM*,33). Then, in Raymonde's final letter, this is followed by the desire, expressed in the first person, for annihilation at the hands of her lover: 'je mourrai, la gorge dans vos doigts, mes mains sur vos épaules, en vous souriant' (*PIM*,219). Landre depicts Raymonde as the masochistic victim of a misogynistic lover, without using the narratorial voice to temper her character's extremism as she has done at earlier stages in the novel, and thereby condoning her protagonist's degradation.

There is no direct parallel to this intense sexual confrontation in the selected German novels, most of which cover the wider ground of the extended family. Yet, despite the feeling of space which this longer cast list offers, these fictional relationships exhibit comparable archetypal gender discrimination, making the wartime subjugation of women a constant theme across the border. Böhme may confront the question of women's secondary status in *Kriegsbriefe der Familie Wimmel*, but elects one of the more insipid characters to raise the issue. Johanna Legrand laments:'Wir, die wir die Söhne zur Welt gebracht haben, werden einfach mundtot gemacht und müssen mit gesetzlich gebundenen Händen zusehen, wie man unsere Kinder zur Schlachtbank führt' (*KW*,13). However, her sudden interest in 'die Frauenfrage' is offset by her concern, a few lines later, for the consequences of war on the autumn fashions. Moreover, although Susanna, the sympathetic pivotal character, admits that women 'von der Gesetzgebung sehr stiefmütterlich behandelt werden, und daß gerechterweise

manches anders sein müßte, als wie es ist' (*KW*,171), her reaction to female orators would befit the misogynist camp:

> Offen gestanden tun mir diese fanatischen Vertreterinnen der "äußersten Linken" immer leid; es soll mir keiner einreden, daß es glückliche Frauen sind, die so erbittert um politische Rechte kämpfen. (*KW*,172)

Her earlier claim that 'das Schicksal hat mich mit allem gesegnet, was zu einem glücklichen Frauendasein gehört: Einen guten, geliebten Mann, gesunde, wohlgeratene Kinder, und mein tägliches Brot' (*KW*,141) is very much in keeping with the general tenor of the work.

However, while Böhme also endows her female protagonists with sufficient spirit and presence of mind to make them formidable opponents in the private, domestic sphere, Helene von Mühlau allows the complete capitulation of the female characters of *Der Kriegsfreiwillige*. The fact of women's secondary status is never questioned in a society where illusions of marital bliss are shattered by the grandmother's practicalities: 'Man kann sich den Mann nicht malen, ganz besonders nicht, wenn man so wenig Mittel hat wie du'(*K*,4).

Three generations of women are presented, each promoting their subservient position. Firstly the grandmother claims, 'Ich muß jemanden haben, für den ich sorgen kann'(*K*,3). Moving down the age range Helene von Mühlau concentrates upon the young widow Maria, whose love for an eternal bachelor has caused her to lead a troubled life. Even when her lover regrets his actions on the eve of the war, Maria's reaction is one of resignation rather than anger: 'Ich hab' dich geliebt und war glücklich durch dich, das wog mir das, was ich entbehren mußte, auf' (*K*,47). In the eyes of her lover she takes on a dependent, child-like role: 'Du bist so grenzenlos, so ganz unverantwortlich weich, Kind!

Wie soll das werden, wenn du nun ganz einsam sein wirst? Wirst du das überhaupt ertragen, Maria!'(*K*,47). In her own words the heroine has loved 'ganz ohne Stolz, ganz ohne Klugheit - so wie man es heute überhaupt nicht mehr findet' (*K*,48). If the writer is insinuating that women of 1914 are no longer prepared to give their love selflessly, she has created a central heroine who refuses to conform to the mood of the times.

The pattern of female misuse at the hands of men is apparently to continue, for Maria openly condemns her son's first sweetheart to the status of a passing fancy: 'wie Blumen sind sie, die einen süßen Duft haben und vergessen sind, sobald man sie nicht mehr sieht' (*K*,252). The novelist never openly queries this sexual inequality, as her female protagonists perpetuate this state of sexual injustice.

Surprisingly, in this war climate, the only depiction of physical violence in *Töchter der Hekuba* is found in Dombrowski's visualization of his wife's battered body as he reacts to her adultery:

> Wenn er es wollte, entkam sie ihm nicht. Ihre langen Haare würde er sich um die Linke schlingen, sie daran festhalten, ihr mit der Rechten in das verlogene Gesicht schlagen - für jede Lüge einen Puff - mit der Faust auf die Nase, auf den Mund, auf die Augen. Blut quoll - das war alles ganz gleich - ihr Gesicht war wie Brei, sie war die schöne Minka nicht mehr.
> (*TdH*,191)

Whilst Viebig refuses to subscribe to the binary oppositions of the battlefield, she acknowledges the balance of power in the sexual équation. As we shall see in the following chapter, Viebig uses the characters of Minka and her husband Dombrowski to illustrate a shift in gender roles, but the threat of male violence initially structures the relationship between the aggressive man and his female victim. It is the obvious hierarchical opposition in which fear keeps women in the

subservient role.

Falling prey to traditional binary oppositions, the writers who adopt the pro-war stance may also choose to sacrifice character or plot development to meet the dictates of patriotism, with fictional figures forming empty vessels to be filled with patriotic ideology. The two novels which most clearly suffer from this tendency are Marcelle Tinayre's *La Veillée des armes* and *Die Opferschale* by Ida Boy-Ed, which offer clear examples of the genre in which the laws of patriarchy and patriotism demand female acquiescence.

In her foreword to *La Veillée des armes*, written on 31 May 1915, Tinayre sets the tone of her novel and is evidently eager to solicit a patriotic response:

> Avec nos amis les plus chers, aujourd'hui bien dispersés, nous avons connu l'angoisse, l'émotion religieuse, l'exaltation intérieure, la volonté du sacrifice et la douleur des adieux, en ces moments inoubliables où nos âmes n'étaient plus que des parcelles de l'âme nationale, où nos affections particulières se fondaient en un sentiment collectif, où le plus faible d'entre nous sentait battre en son coeur mortel le coeur éternel de la France. (*VA*,1-2)

Given Marcelle Tinayre's nationalistic prelude, it is not surprising to discover that the headstrong heroines who populated her earlier fiction have been replaced by Simone Davesnes, a protagonist who expresses the confusion of emotions prevalent when war broke out in 1914. The scene is set by secondary characters, who create an environment in which men appear to have the 'parole', before the narrator introduces François and Simone Davesnes as an idyllic pair living in pre-war contentment. Minor characters act as foils for the Davesnes' bond, the unhappy marriage of convenience of cousin Nicolette and Jean (which parallels the miserable union of Berthold and Katharina in *Die Opferschale*) contrasting with the contented 'mariage sans le luxe' (*VA*,40) of Simone and

François; and, lest the unobservant reader should have missed the point, the narrator subsequently concludes that husband and wife enjoy 'une de ces harmonies qui se réalisent rarement, dans les couples humains, si rarement que la plupart des hommes en parlent avec un peu d'ironie, masquant de scepticisme un regret qu'ils n'avouent pas' (*VA*,271). Marcelle Tinayre is here on the defensive, obviously anticipating censure from her male critics - those like Ernst Tissot, who claimed: 'Nulle *authoress* ne fut plus étrangère à la passion que Mme Tinayre.'[15]

However, the sceptic cannot fail to notice that, in the two-day period depicted in the novel, there is little evidence that the harmony enjoyed by François and Simone Davesnes bears any relation with sexual equality. Unnerved by the turmoil of the mobilization, Simone finds comfort behind the scenes in her biblical status as the 'second sex', accepting her husband's guidance in the belief that 'puisque je suis son oeuvre, et comme Dieu même l'a voulu, l'os de ses os et la chair de sa chair, il faut qu'il reconnaisse en moi sa plus profonde pensée, sa conscience vivante' (*VA*,163).

Tinayre's repeated emphasis on the strength of the Davesnes love-match is balanced by her stress on war's disruption of their harmonious existence, as Simone's desire for peace confronts the initial bellicose reaction of her spouse. While François greets the early news of war with the claim that men are 'prêts à la riposte' (*VA*,48) and waiting eagerly for the call to arms, Simone becomes weak, pale, unable to eat and incapable of understanding her husband's calm patriotic stance:

> C'est un sentiment d'homme, François. Je ne peux pas l'éprouver. C'est à peine si je le peux comprendre. Ce mot: la Guerre! n'a pas le même sens dans nos esprits, et tu ne peux m'en vouloir de trembler quand je l'entends... L'essentiel c'est que toi, tu ne trembles pas. (*VA*,169)

The theme of sexual difference is central to a plot in which external political issues are reflected in the personal confrontation between a soldier and his wife. The central premise of the novel is encapsulated by Ida Boy-Ed in *Die Opferschale*, when the outbreak of war arouses responses in Katharina and her military-minded brother which reflect the male/female divide:

> "Es kann nicht sein!" rief Katharina überwältigt von diesem machtvollen Gegensatz.
> "Es muß sein!" sagte Arbogast. (*DO*,114)

Gender is emphasized rather than diminished in the atmosphere of the mobilization. While the male characters cheerfully accept their duty, the women are left in fearful anticipation.

Tinayre appears to accept many of the traditional gender oppositions. François leads a life of exterior action, while Simone is confined within various apartments, feeling nervous in her trips to the world outside. Even the archetypal Jour/Nuit dichotomy has its role to play in the text:

> Pendant le jour, les hommes ont vécu, intensément, virilement, par toutes leurs énergies combatives. Pendant cette suprême nuit qui commence, ils vont vivre, en amants, en époux, par toutes les forces de la chair et du coeur. La nuit les rend à la femme... (*VA*,263-264)

Despite the narrator's earlier claim in *La Veillée des armes* that François and Simone Davesnes spend their days 'respirant la même atmosphère intellectuelle' (*VA*,42), war fever transforms the relationship and causes François to ignore his wife as he discusses the war with his friend Maxime 'parce que celui-là était citoyen et soldat, comme lui, et, que pour tous deux, les mots avaient le même sens' (*VA*,182). Consequently, rather than 'prolongeant des

conversations infinies' (*VA*,42), Simone finds herself 'séparée même de celui qu'elle adorait, par des sentiments incommunicables' (*VA*,202). The Davesnes couple offer little evidence of the purported incessant communication, providing the public persona of the exuberant soldier and his muted female consort.

Tinayre's own verbosity on the subject of war is expressed through the omniscient narrator, who purveys traditionally male rhetoric. Yet she prevents her female protagonist from expressing an opinion by reducing Simone to the role of the silent witness. Similarly, the servant Marie Pourat, who rules the marital household in peacetime, is rebuffed by her husband when she interrupts his discussion of military matters: 'C'est pas ta place, ici' (*VA*,149). In spite of her personal desire as a woman to contribute to the war commentary, Tinayre creates a number of male orators and humble, silent women.

Accordingly, the couple find themselves divided by a wall of conflicting ideals of valour. Tinayre brings Simone to the silent conclusion: 'La France des femmes est toute d'amour: c'est celle qu'on défend. La France des hommes est d'amour et d'action tout ensemble: c'est celle qui lutte' (*VA*,203). These inner thoughts - not open to contradiction - reflect the tenor of this novel: passive women rely on active, heroic men for their safety.

In her handling of the political issues, Tinayre resorts to a sense of sexual rivalry between France, the soldier and his female companion - a device employed by war supporters, who frequently conceal the patriarchal regime behind female metaphors. The personification of the nation as a mother figure is a popular image in war fiction and propaganda - a factor which Yvonne Pitrois manipulates in her study *Femmes de 1914-1915. Les Héroïnes* when she describes the response of a woman to her husband's death: 'Il a donné sa vie pour la France. Il a bien fait. C'est sa mère; moi, je ne suis que sa femme!...'[16]

France is 'comme le nom maternel aux lèvres des soldats qui vont mourir...' writes Marcelle Tinayre (*VA*,126), creating a maternal rival with whom the childless female character must compete.

The homeland is adopted as a symbolic challenger for male affections and the woman faces an adversary which her own attributes cannot match. Although the propagandist benefits of this approach are obvious in Tinayre's work, her defeated heroine becomes a casualty of the credibility gap. The patriotic slant of *La Veillée des armes* leads to Simone's acceptance in François' presence: 'Mon ami, tu es à la France avant d'être à moi, je le sais' (*VA*,206), but at this point in the novel the words ring hollow. The novel suffers because the limited time-span allows only for an emotive response to the patriotic clichés, while the range of characters offer a variety of perspectives on war, but remain shallow figures. Maxime, introduced as a friend and supporter of Jaurès, sees the demolition of his pacifist beliefs: 'Mais à mesure qu'il parlait, Maxime s'étonnait d'entendre sa propre voix prononcer des mots vains, des mots creux qui avaient été vivants naguère, et qui étaient morts désormais, si bien morts qu'ils laissaient aux lèvres un goût de cendre...'(*VA*,94-95).

In a desire to elevate Simone's status at this juncture, Tinayre looks in particular to classical literature for her character depiction: 'Fille de Racine et non pas fille de Corneille, elle s'avouait incapable d'héroïsme sans une grâce spéciale qu'elle demandait, humblement, à l'exemple des pauvres, au souvenir des ancêtres, à la douceur de la patrie menacée' (*VA*, 211-212). Tinayre's intention to underline the sense of continuity rather than upheaval, evoking sentimental nostalgia for French culture, won the approval of a contemporary critic: 'Mme Tinayre souhaite que son héroïne, toute moderne et d'aujourd'hui très exactement, soit en quelque façon racinienne: oui, et c'est ainsi que, sous la

menace de la barbarie, l'âme française a eu recours à tout son passé pour être plus sûre de soi.'[17] With her tendency to repetition, Tinayre returns to the theme several pages later, when Simone's admirer Bertrand is struck by 'cet air de passion et de pudeur qui l'avaient fait songer, tant de fois, aux princesses de Racine... et il sentit que pour la défendre, il serait joyeux de mourir' (*VA*, 258). Nevertheless, this method fails by emphasizing the theatricality of Simone's role and the hollowness of her words and by the novelist's reliance upon the old clichés of patriarchal discourse and the inspiration of her literary forefathers. There is a sense of role-playing to which the narrator refers when the members of the Raynaud household discuss the war in angry terms in order to 'sauver la face' although 'chacun, en parlant, avait dans la voix, une inflexion tendre et parfois brisée qui contrastait avec ses paroles' (*VA*,241).

Within the course of forty-eight fictional hours, Tinayre's tearful and trembling female protagonist is transformed into a submissive patriot. 'Son coeur, sa chair se révoltèrent' (*VA*,222) at the idea that the man she loves might die in the war, but Simone is forced to accept the inheritance handed down through centuries of patriarchal tradition: 'Sois forte! Ne pleure pas' (*VA*,184). In allowing Simone to undergo an emotional revolt before eventually accepting her duty, Tinayre gives expression to a range of perspectives on war, but concludes with the woman's acceptance of the male philosophy: 'Cette ardeur de ceux que nous aimons nous fait mal, mais nous les aimons d'être ainsi et nous en sommes fières' (*VA*,244). The novelist manipulates her heroine to offer partial resistance, but ultimately to succumb to the overriding patriotic ideology.

Simone's final capitulation is signalled when the narrator treats her with the same bellicose tone as the male protagonists: 'Elle fut une petite parcelle de France qu'animait le généreux désir de résister et de durer. La volonté de la

victoire entra enfin dans ses fibres de femme'(*VA*,231-232). Throughout the text the omniscient narrator has adopted the masculinist perspective, uttering the viewpoint taken up by the fictional military protagonists. When Simone is employed to strike one of the final blows at the enemy, as she 'souhaitait qu'une catastrophe anéantît l'Allemagne entière; elle appelait la mort sur le kaiser et tous les siens' (*VA*,273), her submission is complete.

A similar message is found in von Mühlau's *Der Kriegsfreiwillige*, which switches the focus from husband to son but offers several comparisons with *La Veillée des armes* in the woman's struggle between love and patriotism. As Simone discovers that she is 'une petite parcelle de France', so Maria accepts her duty in the belief that Ernst 'ist ein Stück von Deutschland geworden, und die Liebe und das Mitleid einer Mutter dürfen ihn nicht stören, wenn es seines Amtes waltet'(K,237). The utterance of propagandist vocabulary is a symbol of women's acquiescence.

German female protagonists of the patriotic novels are, therefore, called upon to embody the patriotic spirit and nationalist fervour. The misfortune facing those whose marital bonds cross enemy lines finds particular favour as a plot device with a number of German writers. Helene Christaller reserves this tussle between private and public loyalties for a short story entitled *Die Deutsche*, which tells of German-born Clara who, as the widow of a Frenchman, has lived in France for twenty years. When war breaks out her allegiance to Germany turns her son Leon into an enemy when he chooses to spill his blood for France: 'Ein Abgrund, der alle Erinnerung verschlang, riß zwischen Mutter und Sohn auf - unüberbrückbar. Das da war ihr Sohn nicht, das war ein Feind, den sie haßte'.[18] Clara's decision to regain her homeland means the loss of her children, and her desire for a German victory at the expense of her children sits

uneasily with Christaller's typical religious overtones. It is a clear example of character manipulation to convey a bellicose message.

In the hands of Ida Boy-Ed and Margarete Böhme a similar predicament leads to the same ideological outcome. The personal really does become political as Ida Boy-Ed creates drama by inventing a heroine whose forthcoming marriage to an Englishman is threatened by the outbreak of hostilities between their respective homelands. Describing Guda's plight in *Die Opferschale* a friend explains: 'Wenn Deutschland siegt, verzeiht er das nicht. Und wenn England siegt, verzeiht sie das nicht' (*DO*,197) - a theme which Margarete Böhme takes up in her *Kriegsbriefe der Familie Wimmel* when Mine Wimmel unveils an identical barrier between herself and her Russian spouse: 'Meine Furcht ist Sergeis Hoffnung, mein Triumph würde für Sergei eine Demütigung bedeuten, wo ich weinte, würde er jauchzen, und umgekehrt wäre in diesem Falle mein Jubel sein Kummer' (*KW*,80).

In Böhme's fiction Mine Wimmel is a minor character, whose introduction adds an additional patriotic dimension to the text: 'Aber uns Deutsche kann man nicht mit allen Wurzeln aus der Muttererde reißen und verpflanzen, etwas bleibt zurück; die feinen Fühlfäden der inneren Zugehörigkeit zur alten Heimat sind unzerreißbar'(*KW*,79).

However, in *Die Opferschale*, Guda's dilemma forms the focus of the first half of the novel and is a flagrant form of propaganda. As in *La Veillée des armes*, in which the German servant Lischen is provided as a stereotypical representative of her race, a member of the enemy nation is brought into contact with the German protagonists. Here, however, the subject is not a harmless minor figure introduced for gentle mockery, but a major player who becomes the target of the patriotic bullets. Percy Lightstone, the son of an English lord,

displays all the traits of the melodramatic villain: 'Seine Augen waren sehr hell, mit einem schwarzen Ring um diese wasserblaue Iris - das machte seinen Blick dem des Seeadlers ähnlich: kalt und scharf' (*DO*,19); and at the news of the assassination of Franz Ferdinand: 'War das nicht, als gehe blitzgleich ein Schein von Genugtuung über seine Züge?' (*DO*,35). One would suppose there is a wicked crackle in his voice as he rejects Guda's plea to express his love for her in the German language: 'Deutsch ist doch nicht meine Sprache. Und bald nicht mehr die deine' (*DO*,31).

Given the climate, Percy's unsavoury character makes him a suitable target for anti-English feeling, but this correspondingly undermines the realism of the plot, making Guda's love for him improbable. It is only when Percy ridicules her patriotism that the young woman, who has followed her fiancé 'wie ein gehorsamer Page seinem Herrn und Ritter nachzieht' (*DO*,29), betrays any sense of independent thinking. Percy's words: 'Kümmere Dich nicht um Politik. Dein Reich ist die Liebe, die Anmut' (*DO*,292) are in keeping with the limited role that Guda herself has adopted, and her resultant wrath and discovery that her patriotism 'stärker noch ist als selbst die Geschlechtsliebe' (*DO*,225) resolves the dilemma:

> Die Stimme ihres Blutes hatte nach dem Manne geschrien, eine Stimme, die gebieterischer ist als alles, denn er ist die geheimnisvolle elementare Stimme der Natur.... Aber lauter noch erklang die Stimme des Vaterlandes. (*DO*,163)

Her subsequent escape into the arms of the valiant soldier Thomas is both a triumph for the German hero and a victory for propaganda over credibility which may hearten the German patriot but leaves the sceptical reader unimpressed.

Although this scheme is obviously used to arouse patriotic sentiment in the

novel, the manipulation of women for propagandist ends is not limited to the prospective wives of the enemy. Katharina's apparent prestige as a single-minded woman is quickly demolished by her own low self-esteem ('Ich bin eine sehr einfache Frau' (*DO*,118)) and by her status as the patient victim of an unhappy marriage to the womanizing Berthold Leuckmer:

> Mein Mann wird niemals mir gehören. Aber in Stunden der Leere oder Sorge, wird er immer einmal bei mir ankommen. Ich bin sozusagen sein Altersheim, er weiß: "In ganz fernen, fernen Tagen, wenn gar kein Schaum mehr da ist, sondern bloß noch Hefe, dann hab' ich schließlich eine Frau, die mich pflegen muß". (*DO*,39)

Nevertheless, despite Berthold's unflattering portrayal as a philanderer who has abandoned wife and child, Ida Boy-Ed cannot deny one of the Kaiser's soldiers a pre-battle rehabilitation. The donning of a military uniform allows the fictional civilian to throw a cloak over his past, blunting criticism of the flawed male protagonist whose new-found valiant role requires an untarnished hero.

Previous misconduct fades into insignificance as bravery and patriotism exonerate the central hero from former misdemeanours. It is a one-sided distortion of moral values which Jeanne Landre accepts in Chapter XIV of *...puis il mourut* when the details of Jacques's unsavoury past hold no fears for Raymonde: 'Même, il lui plaisait qu'il eût été ainsi: original, agressif, libertin' (*PIM*,143). From the opening of the novel Landre makes it clear that Jacques 'était disposé à mourir proprement, pour ses idées. Déjà son passé lui apparaissait comme une immense sottise dont il se réhabiliterait volontiers par le sacrifice de sa peau'(*PIM*,12).

In *Die Opferschale* the scoundrel Berthold undergoes a similar metamorphosis: 'als Gatte bin ich tadelnswert, als Sohn leichtfertig, als Vater

oberflächlich gewesen, aber als meines Kriegsherrn Offizier werde ich meinen Mann stehen und mein Leben einsetzen, tapfer und freudig, für Kaiser, Volk und Vaterland' (*DO*,130). Despite Katharina's previous miserable existence, her husband's eleventh-hour remorse permits him a hero's resting place: 'Und so, als eines Helden wollte sie seiner immer voll Herzlichkeit denken. Auf sein Grab nur Lorbeeren legen, nicht den Dornenkranz von vergangenen Bitterkeiten'(*DO*,229). There is no sour note to mar the elegies.

However, Ida Boy-Ed is not prepared to let the patriotism rest there. In the second part of the novel Katharina not only adds to the funeral pyre with the death of two brothers, but also enters a second subservient relationship with the poor, but honest Ottbert Rüdener - 'denn sie hatte ihn auf den Thron ihrer Liebe erhoben und sah zu ihm empor' (*DO*,374). Refusing to let Katharina find comfort in a conventional happy ending with the man she loves, Ida Boy-Ed manipulates Ottbert's death in battle in the final pages to produce an ultimate propagandist message. Having experienced the loss of three members of her family and a prospective spouse, Katharina becomes the second character in the text to find consolation for her suffering in patriotic motherhood. In an earlier subplot Katharina's cousin Lotti, widowed during her pregnancy, makes her valiant promise to the Fatherland:

> Ein Tag wird kommen, wo ich meines Gatten Sohn an diese Stätte führe - zu einem rechten deutschen Mann will ich ihn erziehen - würdig dieser Zeit - würdig seines Vaters. (*DO*,327)

Katharina's espousal of her patriotic duty some hundred pages later merely underlines the cliché, rather than emphasizing the consistency of the heroism.

> Männer sollte sie erziehen - Dem neuen Deutschland neue Bürger. -

> Und das Feuer, das diese heilige Zeit in allen Herzen entzündet - die jungen Mütter hatten es zu hüten, damit es weiterbrenne im nächsten Geschlecht. (*DO*,435)

It is a theme reiterated by Thea von Harbou in her patriotic publication *Der Krieg und die Frauen*:

> Daß sie ihre jungen Söhne heranziehe zu einer Wacht am Rhein, von der die Welt weiß, daß sie unbesieglich ist - das wird im Frieden, der uns kommen muß, das größte Werk der deutschen Frau sein.
> Dann hat sie für ihr Vaterland und für die Menschheit mehr getan, als Frauen bisher zu tun vermochten.[19]

Having been presented as a victim of patriarchy, Katharina's future happiness is now sacrificed to a nationalistic conclusion, just as Guda's credibility had suffered earlier for a similar cause.

Helene Christaller's novel *Die unsere Hoffnung sind* is perhaps the clearest example of a patriotic tale couched in patriarchal terms. Here is a society in which the gender divisions are explicitly stated, the traditional seating arrangements in church unsubtly reflecting the structure of the male-dominated hierarchy: 'Rechts saßen die Mädchen, links die verheirateten Frauen und oben auf der Empore die Männer' (*UH*,133). Even the dreams of the members of the Eberhard household are both prophesies of the future and a reaffirmation of accepted roles: the sons have visions of war, the daughter of a baby, and the female servant of marriage.

Continuing this penchant for explicit imagery, the narrator describes a god-like father figure in Herr Eberhard: 'Alle Sorgen verschwanden, wenn er sie einmal angeblickt hatte, und die größte Verwirrung wurde einfach und klar, wenn seine Hände hineingriffen' (*UH*,13). It is later revealed that this flamboyant male figure who 'wie die liebe Sonne Wärme und Freude spendet' (*UH*,36) has

been supported throughout by his long-suffering spouse:

> Denn ihr Weg war hart gewesen, und wo ihr Gatte geflogen war und keine Schwierigkeiten gesehen hatte, da war sie an jeden Stein gestoßen, über den sie steigen mußte. Aber sie ergänzten sich herrlich, der frohe leichtherzige Mann mit der Künstlernatur, die keine Schwierigkeiten sah, und die sorgende Frau, die dem geliebten Mann die Anstöße des täglichen Lebens redlich aus dem Wege räumte, damit er fliegen konnte.
> (*UH*,15-16)

However, the narrator, at pains to present the Eberhards as a happy couple, never questions the fact that conjugal stability is achieved at the woman's expense.

Helene Christaller echoes Helene von Mühlau's pessimistic view of the fate of future female generations. Daughter Isolde Eberhard's ambitions for a teaching career are dashed, as her mother's were before her, when she is ridiculed by a member of that very profession: 'Wenn Sie durchaus einen Beruf haben wollen, so werden Sie Kuhmagd' (*UH*,7) - coincidentally the job offered to Gotton by Camille Mayran: 'Elle oublia aussi tout ce qu'elle avait appris à l'école. Le soin de l'étable et la culture de quelques légumes absorbaient ses pensées' (*GC*,17).

Isolde's brother Alf, competently confirming that sexual discrimination is alive and well in young men of 1914, reassures her:

> ihr Frauen braucht gar nicht so rasend gescheit zu sein. Wenn ihr's Herz auf dem rechten Fleck habt, einen gesunden Menschenverstand und eine linde und geschickte Hand, dann habt ihr alles, was Mann und Kinder brauchen. (*UH*,10)

This is a theory which Christaller supports rather than undermines. When Alf returns from the front with his earlier belief in the traditional female role strengthened by his experiences, the writer is eager to duplicate the patriotic

notion of women as guardians of the home:

> Schlicht und arbeitsam, fröhlich und gut und eine Liebe, in der die Bilder der Schrecken und des Grauens, die unsere Augen geschaut, dahinschmelzen müssen wie Schnee vor der Sonne. So sollen unsere Frauen sein, so die Hüterinnen von Deutschlands Zukunft. (*UH*,158)

The message is echoed in the thoughts of Isolde's future spouse: 'Das war das beste Heiratsgut, das ein Mädchen mitbringen konnte: Fleiß und Güte' (*UH*,194), indicating that marriage will bring Isolde no change of ideology in a post-war setting. The cosy atmosphere and Isolde's obvious happiness with her domestic role are evidence of Christaller's didactic message to young girls to stay at home and promulgate the values of motherhood and housewifery. Maturity supposedly shows Isolde where her heart lies as she vows: 'weißt du, das möcht ich doch noch am allerliebsten sein von allen Frauenberufen, eine Mutter' (*UH*,45).

While Marcelle Tinayre, Ida Boy-Ed and Helene Christaller employ their female protagonists as agents of the patriotic message, Camille Mayran portrays her heroine Gotton Connixloo as an exponent of the age-old virgin/whore dichotomy. Within a biblical framework, the outbreak of war takes on the apocalyptic connotations of the Day of Judgement as Gotton - rejected as a whore for her liaison with Luc and treated as a witch for her 'fumées dans la tête' - is eventually elevated to the status of wartime martyr. Of all the writers in this study, Camille Mayran exemplifies most vividly the Kristevian concept of the marginalization of women, summarized by Toril Moi in *Sexual/Textual Politics*:

> From a phallocentric point of view, women will then come to represent the necessary frontier between man and chaos; but because of their very marginality they will also always seem to recede into and merge with the chaos of the outside... It is this position that has enabled male culture

sometimes to vilify women as representing darkness and chaos, to view them as Lilith or the Whore of Babylon, and sometimes to elevate them as the representatives of a higher and purer nature, to venerate them as Virgins and Mothers of God.'[20]

The depiction of the village church dominating the landscape in the opening pages of the *Histoire de Gotton Connixloo* sets the moral tone for this parable of a young woman's adulterous relationship, and her inner turmoil and eventual repentance as love conflicts with the teachings of her Catholic upbringing.

In the initial peacetime setting Camille Mayran seems to mock the figure of the pious Connixloo and his confusion as his daughter grows to womanhood: 'Ces futures femmes sont si mystérieuses déjà!' (*GC*,21). Yet the writer exploits the stereotypical 'femme fatale' persona, with the upright citizen Connixloo secretly tormented by memories of the dead wife for whom 'il eût jadis vendu son âme' (*GC*,24). Cutting a pathetic figure as the 'voyeur' hidden in the bushes to spy on his daughter Gotton, the father observes 'ce qu'il y avait de charnel et de voluptueux dans la démarche lente de cette belle fille, dans le balancement de ses épaules et de ses hanches robustes' (*GC*,25). His solution is to marry her off - confine that sexuality within the bonds of wedlock before she loses her virginity and commits 'la faute qui ne se répare pas' (*GC*,47) - and in the first chapters it is Gotton, lonely and unloved by a father with 'des idées très nettes sur la distinction du péché mortel et du péché véniel'(*GC*,12), who is the object of the reader's sympathy.

As the plot progresses, patriarchal concepts and Old Testament imagery are employed to the detriment of the woman, confirming Gotton in her role as the site of male temptation. In the words of the omniscient narrator she is transformed from 'une Eve encore innocente' (*GC*,40) to a 'belle fille

pécheresse...Vénus, la diablesse qu'adoraient les païens et pour qui se perdent tant d'hommes' (*GC*,73), residing in a room 'pavée de tuiles rouges' (*GC*,69). In the priest's public sermon it is Gotton who is condemned: 'Une enfant de notre paroisse a quitté pour les puanteurs de l'adultère le parfum d'un saint foyer' (*GC*,63-64) and turned into a social pariah: 'l'adultère doit être évité plus qu'un lépreux, puisque c'est une lèpre de l'âme qu'il risque de communiquer' (*GC*,64).

The narrator does not question the protagonist's guilt. While the adulterer remains indifferent and unpunished, it is Gotton who fears that 'une malédiction d'en haut avait desséché ses entrailles' (*GC*,84) and utters the words of self-condemnation: 'Pour l'idolâtrie de mon corps, il a quitté depuis trois ans la femme qu'il avait prise devant Dieu et les petits qui avaient besoin de lui!' (*GC*,115) Mayran manipulates Gotton for her 'otherness', distancing herself from her heroine and depicting the woman's denigration in the eyes of both patriarchy and the Catholic Church without compensatory comment. The heroine comes to fulfil the role of the 'séductrice, héritière de toutes les Eves génériques'.[21] The traditional roles are taken a step further with the subjective presentation of Luc's wife, through the eyes of Gotton, as a woman 'laide et malpropre, qui ne parlait que pour se plaindre et marchait en traînant les pieds' (*GC*,60). The novelist has fallen back upon the catalogue of stereotypes and the 'two incorrigible figures' of the Witch and the Shrew.[22]

The invasion of the German army turns the private affair into a public issue. In Gotton's tortured mind, the opportunity to offer her own life in recompense for the murder of a German soldier is an act of atonement for her sins which thereby saves the village from destruction. As she explains in her note of farewell to Luc, Gotton goes before the German firing squad to seek heavenly forgiveness for their adultery, paying for their mutual sin with her own life: 'Si

tu entendais bientôt que j'ai péri, moi aussi, sois heureux pour nous deux. Ce sera le signe que nous sommes pardonnés' (*GC*,144-145). As the novella ends with the priest's blessing, there is a final affirmation of absolution from the Church.

When the feminist pacifist Nelly Roussel reiterated the role played by religion in the oppression of the female sex in her *Paroles de Combat et d'Espoir*, her words would have served as a criticism of the status of Mayran's fictional heroine:

> Tant que la Femme restera l'humble servante de l'Eglise, tant qu'elle permettra qu'on lui parle d'abnégation, de sacrifice, tant qu'elle acceptera des dogmes qui l'insultent et qui ont servi de prétexte à toutes les humiliations dont on l'abreuve depuis des siècles...il n'y a évidemment aucune raison pour qu'elle cesse de souffrir et d'être esclave.[23]

Gotton's death is not a blow for the heroic female, but underlines a deeper injustice bound up in religious precepts, a clear example of gender discrimination in patriarchal society. Even in the final act of execution the woman is denied an heroic exit or an occasion to express noble sentiments, as Mayran avoids the death scene, offering the reader only the body of a silent victim.

In Camille Mayran's second story *L'Oubliée*, the protagonist Denise is also a victim of a religious faith which instils a sense of her own culpability, rather than an understanding of natural human desires. Once again, the war infringes upon a private human relationship, separating Denise from her fiancé Philippe and sealing her fate when the German occupation of her village isolates her from the outside world.

Caring for her dying mother in enforced exile, the sense of claustrophobia increases Denise's religious fervour, transforming her bedside vigil into a

metaphorical Garden of Gethsemane. Her escape into a private fantasy world is later to arouse her sense of culpability: 'La parole d'agonie du Seigneur se prononçait dans mon esprit: "Eh quoi! vous n'avez pu veiller une heure avec moi!..."'(*LO*,268) and the moments when she considered her own happiness as she sat at her mother's side haunt her as a symbol of her egotism. Convinced that her desires were a form of filial betrayal, Denise accepts that Philippe's subsequent treachery is a just punishment for her sins:

> Je compris que mon coeur trop cupide avait mérité son désastre. Et l'idée me vint que peut-être ce serait mon sort, mon utilisation, que de rester simplement par ma douleur même un être qui croit à la douleur et qui a pitié. (*LO*,269)

When Philippe reveals his infidelity, Mayran offers the wronged woman no voice to express anger or pain: 'je me sentais devenir inerte comme une pierre' (*LO*,251). By concluding the tale with Denise's future of selfless dedication to the care of an orphaned boy, the author has created a second female character who epitomizes the subjugated woman described by the feminist Madeleine Pelletier in her pamphlet *Avons-nous des devoirs?*: 'L'éducation de la femme... est un véritable dressage au sacrifice. Son avenir, son bonheur ne comptent pas, devant l'avenir, le salut ou le bonheur d'un frère, d'un mari, d'un amant.'[24]

By the conclusion of Mayran's two *Récits de Guerre* the first female protagonist has been executed, and the second is abandoned. In contrast, Luc Heemskerque is safe, reunited with his children and free to remarry in the knowledge that 'Gotton l'avait voulu ainsi' (*GC*,164); and Philippe looks forward to fatherhood with his new wife, while Denise accepts the burden of remorse in the Claudelian belief: 'La vie est dure, mais c'est le chemin vers Dieu' (*LO*,224). By creating heroines who nobly accept their martyrdom, whether actual or

émotional, Camille Mayran complies with the notion that this is a man's world, conforming to the Kristevian view of Christianity:

> Univeraliste, le christianisme associe les femmes aussi à la communauté symbolique, mais à condition qu'elles gardent la *virginité* ou, si cela n'a pas été le cas, qu'elles expient la jouissance charnelle par le *martyre*.[25]

Both the virginal Denise and the figure of Gotton, as sinner and martyr, fulfil these limited roles.

In the literature of both nations women are created as vehicles for patriarchal and patriotic propaganda, often even denied the dignity of a voice and reduced to passive objects of the masculinist system. Strangely, both Tinayre and Delarue-Mardrus - eager to offer their own response to the conflict - advocate silence for the female sex. In *La Veillée des armes* the demands are made by François's colleague, and Simone humbly accepts the wartime role he assigns to women:

> Qu'elles se taisent, d'abord!... Pas de manifestations de suffragettes! Le devoir des femmes, en temps de guerre, consiste à gouverner la maison, à élever les enfants, à soigner les blessés. Le reste nous regarde. (*VA*,201)

Although it is acknowledged that women suffer, their pain must not disrupt the social order. Tinayre's women are depicted as taciturn victims:

> celles qui savent souffrir la faim, le froid, la fatigue, la solitude et la déception; qui accouchent sans crier, élèvent durement des fils qu'elles adorent, suppléent le père disparu et meurent à la peine, en silence.
> (*VA*,148)

In contrast, Elisabeth Clèves in *Un Roman civil* does not require a male sermon,

but draws her own conclusions and spreads the message of female subservience to a rebellious female servant in the Malavent household:

> Les femmes n'ont qu'à garder le silence pendant que leurs hommes se battent. Ce n'est pas, en ce moment, le tour des femmes de crier. Ce sont les hommes qui souffrent, et ils chantent. Vous, on ne vous demande que de vous taire, et vous allez vous taire! (*RC*,90)

Having created a female character with opinions of her own, Delarue-Mardrus uses that power to berate other women. The silent woman, holding her tongue in spite of personal convictions, is to dumbly accept the suffering imposed upon her by masculine governments.

From this analysis these novels appear to be 'submissive' texts, which simply promulgate the stereotypical images of femininity espoused by patriarchy. Both French and German novelists have devised characters who appear manacled by the peace-time sexual hierarchies which place power in the hands of men and offer woman a role as the 'second sex.' Whether this be achieved within the structure of a loving relationship, as in Tinayre's novel, or foisted upon the woman by age-old beliefs of woman's sinfulness in the eyes of the Church, as in Mayran's tale, the overriding impression created is of women's inferior status.

In developing such fictional characters, the wider political debates have been translated into personal issues. Questions of loyalty are discussed within the framework of a family or sexual relationship, and female characters are engineered for patriotic ends. When war itself enters the pages of the novels, the initial effect is to demote the female protagonists as, by toeing the patriotic line, women writers produce heroic types whose stereotypical 'masculine' traits of strength and courage appear to amplify sexual difference. The manipulation of female characters is heightened by their expression of xenophobic or bellicose

statements which conflict with their character development. Fictional acquiescence results in the submission of the female sex to the weapon-wielding male and an articulation of the values of patriarchal discourse.

Such damning evidence may lead one to believe that in producing their war novels the writers are, or have chosen to remain, oblivious to the efforts of the feminist movement to enhance the status of women, or to the upheaval in gender relations which the war was to cause. War has 'put women back in their place, at the foot of altars erected to honour male heroes,'[26] and thereby negated many of the progressive steps made in the struggle for female equality.

However, these traditional hierarchical oppositions provide only one aspect of these novels, produced as they were against the cataclysm of the world conflict and the subsequent disruption of normal patterns of existence. The plots may put the male warriors on pedestals, but when they step down to march off to war to perform their heroic deeds, the female characters are left behind in the safety of the 'home front'. As Diana Holmes describes: 'Women were identified with home, with a smug hypocritically bellicose society that played while the soldiers died'[27] and, as well as striving to uphold traditional sexual divisions, the patriarchal masters of 1914-1918 found that the First World War created unexpected shifts in power relations as the men found themselves trapped in the trenches, while the women walked out to discover a new independence.

It is this effect of war, eroding the boundaries of the conventional male/female relationship, which I seek to examine in the following chapter. Writing at a crossroads in women's history, the novelists wove a second thread into the literary text, finding the means to undermine the traditional view of sexual difference which patriotic wartime propaganda endorsed.

NOTES

1 Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p.75.

2 See 'Sorties' in Hélène Cixous and Catherine B. Clement, *La Jeune née* (Paris: Union Générale d'Editions, 1975), p.115.

3 *Ibid.*, p.116.

4 Paul Fussell, *op.cit.*, p.74.

5 Hélène Cixous and Catherine Clement, *op.cit.*, pp.116-117.

6 Louis Barthou, *L'Effort de la Femme française* (Paris: Bloud & Gay, 1917), p.7.

7 Paul Fussell, *op.cit.*, p.21.

8 See 'Soldier's Heart: Literary Men, Literary Women, and the Great War' in *No Man's Land. Volume 2*, by Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989), p.265.

9 Vera Brittain, *Testament of Youth* (London: Virago, 1985), p.104.

10 Anne-Marie and Charles Lalo, 'Les Rôles de la femme dans la guerre d'après le roman' published in *Mercure de France*, 16-1-1916, p.264.

11 See 'Drawing the Lines - Gender, Peace and War: An Introduction' by Sharon MacDonald in *Images of Women in Peace and War*, edited by Sharon Macdonald, Pat Holden and Shirley Ardener (Basingstoke: Macmillan Education Limited, 1987), p.15.

12 Louis Barthou, *op.cit.*, p.17.

13 Marcelle Capy, *Une Voix de femme dans la mêlée* (Paris: Ollendorf, 1916), p.84.

14 See Ann Rosalind Jones' chapter 'Inscribing femininity: French theories of the feminine' in *Making a Difference: Feminist Literary Criticism*, edited by Gayle Greene and Coppélia Kahn (London and New York: Methuen, 1985, p.84.

15 Ernst Tissot, *Nouvelles Princesses de Lettres* (Paris: Fontemoing & Cie, 1911), p.168.

16 Yvonne Pitrois, *Femmes de 1914-1915. Les Héroïnes* (Geneva: Jeheber, 1916), p.21.

17 André Beaunier, 'Le Roman et la guerre' in *Revue des deux mondes*, Tome 32, mars-avril 1916, p.687.

18 Helene Christaller, 'Die Deutsche' in a collection of short stories entitled *Stille Opfer* (Hagen i.W.: Verlag von Otto Rippel, 1915), p.59.

19 Thea von Harbou, *Die deutsche Frau im Weltkrieg* (Leipzig: Hesse & Becker Verlag, 1916), p.144.

20 See Toril Moi, *Sexual/Textual Politics* (London and New York: Methuen, 1985), p.167.

21 For further comment on the witch/hysteric role see the section entitled 'La Coupable' in Hélène Cixous and Catherine Clement, *op.cit.*

22 See Mary Ellman quoted in Toril Moi, *op.cit.*, p.34.

23 Nelly Roussel, *Paroles de Combat et d'Espoir* (Epone: Edition de l'Avenir social, 1919), p.10.

24 Madeleine Pelletier, *Avons-nous des devoirs*? (Caen: Le Semeur, s.d.), p.6.

25 Julia Kristeva, *Des Chinoises* (Paris: des femmes, 1974).

26 See 'The New Eve and the Old Adam: Changes in French Women's Condition at the Turn of the Century' by Michelle Perrot in *Behind the Lines. Gender and the two World Wars* edited by Higonnet, Jenson, Michel and Weitz (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), p.51.

27 Diana Holmes, *The Image of Woman in Selected French Fiction of the Inter-war Period*, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Sussex 1977, p.19.

CHAPTER FOUR

RE-DRAWING THE LINES

A closer examination of the selected novels reveals that the traditional hierarchical oppositions upheld by patriotism and patriarchy form but one feature of women's fiction of the First World War. Two-dimensional gallant heroes and compliant women may find their place in the early bellicose atmosphere, but the prolongation of the war leads to a re-drawing of the lines, both historically and metaphorically. As in Foringer's war poster, the gaze shifts from the 'eternal feminine' to concentrate upon the power of the nurse and the impotence of the tiny male figure in her arms. On the 'champ de bataille' of sexual conflict women, far from continuing in their acquiescent role, have taken up new positions in the battle.

Greene and Kahn claim that 'gender is constructed in patriarchy to serve the interests of male supremacy.'[1] Biological reasons for the sexual division of labour during war assert that the man who is not tied to a life cycle is freer to move away from the home and fight.[2] As Annie Leclerc describes in *Parole de femme*:

Plus commode, plus intéressant pour la communauté que les hommes, plus indépendants vis-à-vis de leur corps (pas de règles, de grossesse, d'allaitement) soient chargés des travaux extérieurs qui exigent aussi plus de force physique (chasse, pêche, métallurgie, agriculture).
L'hypothèse de départ étant admise, on n'a non plus aucun mal à comprendre pourquoi ce sont les hommes, et non les femmes, qui font la guerre, et cela toujours pour les mêmes raisons.[3]

However, the slaughter on the battlefield, where mechanized weaponry made gender an insignificant issue in the question of survival, revealed a potential error of judgement in the allocation of stereotypical roles. The dichotomies so often paraded which express male and female polarities of 'culture and nature', 'reason and passion', 'day and night' must also provide the wartime polarity of the sexes: 'death and life.'

The selected writers fall into two categories. The first consists of novelists like Jeanne Landre, Lucie Delarue-Mardrus and Margarete Böhme, who accept the patriotic principles, but reveal the consequences of war upon traditional gender relations; and the second includes Rachilde, Helene von Mühlau and Clara Viebig, who disdain the exaltation of masculinist values and speak words of pacifism rather than patriotism.

Whilst the focus for traditional male war literature is the field of conflict, women writers concentrate upon the 'home front', away from the bloodshed. Only Jeanne Landre's *...puis il mourut* and Helene von Mühlau's *Der Kriegsfreiwillige* provide a constant switch in narrative perspective which presents a balance between the experience of the female protagonists and the lives of the soldiers in the barracks or the trenches. In the majority of the plots, the front line remains ill-defined, generally invisible, territory.

The setting is the domain offered to women far behind the lines, which Gilbert and Gubar have entitled 'Herland' - borrowing the vision of a female

utopia from Charlotte Perkins Gilman's novel of the same name, which was first published in 1915.[4] This is the world from which soldiers cheerfully take their leave on troop trains, only to return on stretchers or as visitors with temporary visas. In her 1915 predictions of *La Femme après la Guerre* Madame H Cloquié presents a vision of new gender roles:

> Combien de femmes désormais devront aller dehors pour gagner leur vie et celle de leur famille? Combien de grands blessés, de malades devront rester à la maison pour garder les enfants, voire même pour diriger le ménage, voilà bien en effet le royaume des femmes.[5]

The writers of 1914-1918 reveal that the rulers of this 'royaume des femmes' have already drawn the lines around their territory, assuming authority in the peaceful cities in which civilian men are outsiders and wounded soldiers have been transformed into helpless victims.

The possibilities of a wartime female utopia fuelled the imagination of the war propagandists. A speech on *Der Krieg und die Frauen* given in 1914 reported that soldiers returning home to towns and villages far from the battle zones discovered women for whom war had brought its own rewards: 'Es muß gesagt sein: sie leben sich ihren guten Tag. Viele Frauen auf dem Lande haben noch nie so viel Geld in der Hand gehabt wie jetzt';[6] and in the cities life appeared to continue with a somewhat bizarre sense of normality:

> Wie muß das Gefühl der heimkehrenden Verwundeten verletzt werden durch den Gegensatz dieses ruhig heiteren, fast lachenden Straßenbildes mit elegant, ja kokett gekleideten Damen und ihrem Leben in den Schützengräben.[7]

The contrast between life in the trenches and the apparent unconcern of the home front is a popular theme in male war literature.

Across the border, Maurice Barrès took up the same message in a patronizing sermon to the women of France:

> Je pense bien que vous n'êtes pas dupe quand plusieurs de ces soldats généreux veulent bien vous dire qu'ils aiment qu'à l'arrière la vie continue aisée, large, heureuse. N'abusez pas de cette magnanimité. Ayons toujours sous les yeux leurs souffrances, leurs sacrifices et leur supériorité morale.[8]

The supremacy of the male soldier, once a given in pro-war propaganda, now needed to be emphasized as the death toll continued to rise and women appeared to have been offered the better part.

Interestingly, French and German women writers do not capitalize upon the opportunity to create a fictional female paradise on the home front for their central protagonists, but allow the advantages for women to be glimpsed through the presentation of minor characters. In Camille Mayran's *L'Oubliée* Denise returns to Paris after a period spent under the German occupation and is struck by the expressions of people in the street:

> quels visages on rencontrait, terreux, soucieux, harassés, avec toujours les mêmes plis flasques et tristes des narines à la bouche, et puis de temps en temps dans la masse, une jolie femme, une créature tout à fait d'une autre espèce que les autres, avec des joues roses, des dents brillants, une manière vive et légère de remuer la tête, un air content. (*LO*,257)

In the midst of the suffering, this female figure in the crowd symbolizes a better life which has not been granted to Denise herself. Böhme uses a similar example in *Kriegsbriefe der Familie Wimmel* when the nurse, Ellen Legrand, distinguishes between the women who wait anxiously for news from the front and the fashionable Berliners who appear oblivious to events:

> Denn in dieser Straße hatte das Blut unserer armen Jungen draußen und die Tränen der trauernden deutschen Mütter, Frauen und Schwestern offensichtlich den Damen weder die Schminkkruste von den Gesichtern gespült, noch den aufdringlichen Patschuliduft der Auslandshexerei entfernt. (*KW*,69)

In contrast, none of the heroines enjoy a carefree existence because, as we shall see in more detail in the following chapter, their lives are inextricably tied to the suffering male protagonists at the front.

Nevertheless, all the writers bear witness to an alteration in the traditional balance of power between the sexes, in which the men are the unexpected losers. As the outbreak of war has given rise to a new social order in which the army is the power house which men must enter to be considered 'whole', the men outside the walls of the barracks are outcasts on the home front. Sharon MacDonald claims that 'male warriors are metaphorically castrated by the official 'peace' in which they no longer see themselves as protectors of women',[9] but this theory is equally relevant to those males who are unable to bear arms in time of war.

The first assault on stereotypical roles is, therefore, an assertion of female authority within the boundaries of patriotism. The women who handed out white feathers to Englishmen were acting as agents of the patriarchal system, yet adopting a new position within its structure as they sought revenge upon the new 'weaker' members of society: the men who did not bear arms. This response is manifested as a form of inverted sexism, which applies the same patriarchal yardstick but allows women to take the measurements.

With the departure of the young soldiers for the trenches, the main threat to women's authority in the wartime climate comes from the military men of previous generations. Francis, the civilian doctor of *Un Roman civil*, despairs:

'Des femmes! Des vieillards! Passer ma guerre comme ça!' (*RC*,99), but the writers ensure that the old men are dismissed as relics of the past, allowing women to take control of the peaceful territory behind the lines.

Coincidentally, Marcelle Tinayre and Helene von Mühlau echo each other's literary devices when they countenance fears about the scale of this modern war which run counter to the propaganda platitudes. In *La Veillée des armes* the elderly Raynaud, who fought in the Franco-Prussian War, exhibits the strongest sense of pessimism in the text: 'il pressentait l'horreur de la guerre nouvelle, scientifiquement préparée et mettant aux prises des millions d'hommes' (*VA*,245); while, in *Der Kriegsfreiwillige*, Helene von Mühlau allows the old grandfather, who played his part in the nineteenth-century conflict, to express his own anxieties:

> Wer selbst im Krieg gestanden hat, nur der kann sich ein klares Bild von dem, was jetzt in der Welt vorgeht, machen. Und dann bin ich auch zu alt, um mich ganz und gar der frohen Zuversicht: Wir werden und wir müssen siegen! hinzugeben. Es ist eine zu gewaltige Übermacht, gegen die wir kämpfen. (*K*,32)

Both old men are minor characters in the story, their aged civilian status permitting them to utter the possibility of defeat without detracting from the bellicose enthusiasm of the young soldiers, nor the ultimately stoical acceptance of the women. While giving voice to the fears, the writers are able to retain their patriotic façade.

In a period when youth is revered, old soldiers have taken up the humble stance traditionally assigned to the female sex. As the narrator explains in *Der Kriegsfreiwillige*: 'Die Alten stellten die jüngste Jugend plötzlich auf ein hohes Podest und sahen zu ihr auf' (*K*,55). Consequently, they are soft targets for the

acerbic pen of several women writers, who milk the situation for comic potential.

Colette quickly subverts standard expectations of gender roles in her anecdote 'Le vieux Monsieur' in *Les Heures longues*, when the unknown person who asks, 'Ma laine chinée? qu'a-t-on fait de ma laine chinée? Ah! la voilà sous le fauteuil!' is revealed as an ex-soldier who has joined the women's crochet circle as 'un motif honorable pour fuir les vieilles barbes comme moi qui sont restées, et dont l'optimisme même est lugubre' (*LHL*,25). Colette's protagonist seeks consolation among the women - the sex which controls this domain behind the lines - rather than with his male contemporaries and their ineffectual theories.

Margarete Böhme exploits the same topic of the old civilian for humorous effect in *Kriegsbriefe der Familie Wimmel* as Uncle Thomas, unable to fight, consoles himself by chasing imaginary spies and guarding the bridges from attack in a number of one-man attempts to save Germany. When he accuses a lady of hiding a bomb beneath her clothes ('weil sie vorn wie'n Brett und hinten 42-Zentimete-Kaliber war), his claim that 'ihre hintere Leiblichkeit war unnatürlich' proves to be unjustified. Instead of the praise he expects to receive for his careful observation, he is rebuked for 'Belästigung des Publikums und Mangel an Takt' (*KW*,39). By mocking the figure of the old soldier clinging to the past, Böhme upholds the mythology of the young hero created by the propaganda machine, whilst revealing this incompetent fool in his uniform to be a social embarrassment.

Therefore, wartime polarity works in both directions. Just as female protagonists have been reduced to stereotypical images of 'femininity' in the early stages of women's war fiction, so male characters find that the attributes of 'masculinity' which initially produced their gender superiority have now conspired against them. The old men who no longer conform to the military

standards have become powerless figures in this new economy. Here is a matriarchal society, in which men are ostracized figures or invited guests who have lost their traditional privileges.

A similar fate befalls the younger civilian men. By taking a gentle, perhaps effeminate boy who does not fit the stereotype of the young recruit, Helene von Mühlau explores the influence of the words 'Man braucht uns' (*K*,54) over impressionable German youth, and the fear of rejection which lies behind the bellicose bluster: 'Wenn ich doch zu schwach, zu schmal sein sollte?' (*K*,60). The men who do not immediately satisfy the military standards discover that they, rather than the women, are the secondary citizens in this society.

The plot of *Der Kriegsfreiwillige* is used to examine maternal bonds, as Ernst blames his mother Maria for treating him as a weakling: 'So ein Blödsinn - und weil sie das immer wiederholte, weil sie immerfort in Sorgen um seine Gesundheit gewesen war, hatte er es eben als Tatsache hingenommen, daß er ein zarter, schwächlicher Junge sei, der Schonung bedürfte' (*K*,60-61). The values which have governed his peacetime existence are now rejected in a desire to emulate the heroic role models: 'Er will Mann sein; er will stark und lustig sein! Der Mutter tut das Herz weh, das weiß er. Aber sie soll es ihm nicht sagen. Es nutzt ja nichts. Hinaus will er und muß er' (*K*,159).

In the fairy-tale atmosphere of Helene Christaller's *Die unsere Hoffnung sind*, the Eberhard sons are eager to enlist, for 'Soldat werden war für die Buben jetzt der Inbegriff von Männlichkeit' (*UH*,79-80). As patriotic writers call male courage into question, men must prove their worth before critical (generally female) eyes. The patriarchal criteria which were initially employed to determine women's secondary, non-combatant status may now be used to judge the unarmed male.

Such men must seek excuses for their presence in this 'royaume des femmes': 'Ich war es meinen Eltern schuldig, als einziger Sohn, und wo doch Papa meinte, daß ich nicht kräftig genug sei' (*UH*,197), is the explanation offered by Erwin, the doctor's son, to the young girls of the village. 'Die Mädchen rümpften schweigend die Nase' (*UH*,197) - a reaction which requires no further condemnation from the narrator to convey the disdain in which Erwin's inaction is held. The men who remain far from the enemy lines may be physically safe, but discover that their character is under attack from female ridicule.

In the overtly patriotic texts, criticism of the male characters is most telling from the lips of the female protagonists. For Jacques in ...*puis il mourut* sexual prowess and military skill appear to be equated, and the narrator tells of Raymonde's angry outbursts at the men in civilian clothing: 'Fille de chef, Française fervente, intelligente et vibrante, Raymonde ne taisait pas son mépris pour ceux dont la guerre n'avait pas voulu' (*PIM*,28). It is in the reaction of the female to the non-combatant male that the writers are able to express the first fluctuation in power relations.

The topic of physical disability, which counters the typical presentation of the heroic male, is manipulated in the French texts by Camille Mayran and Lucie Delarue-Mardrus. Both create male protagonists who are 'boiteux' - an impediment which Rachilde describes from her personal perspective in *Dans le puits*, when she relates her childhood experiences: 'Il était défendu, dans ma famille, de parler de ce défaut physique qui devait m'empêcher de me marier, d'avoir des enfants ou d'arriver à quoi que ce fût de normal dans la vie des femmes' (*DP*,36). This fear of sterility, which Rachilde recounts in this autobiographical episode, is mirrored by the castratory treatment of the 'heroes'

of the *Histoire de Gotton Connixloo* and *Un Roman civil*. By developing male characters who are also 'boiteux' and unable to fight, Camille Mayran and Lucie Delarue-Mardrus sabotage their protagonists' authority.

In the *Histoire de Gotton Connixloo* Luc has the 'épaules de lutteur' which could kill a man 'd'un coup de pioche' (*GC*,40), and he maintains his manly stature in his peacetime role as a blacksmith: 'Appuyée sur son bras, Gotton se sentait protégée' (*GC*,75). Yet his disability below the waist initially diminishes Luc in Connixloo's eyes, as if this diminishes him as a sexual threat.

Although Gotton is, as we have seen, caught up in the Catholic doctrine of sexual guilt, Mayran endows her with an autonomous streak which causes her to take the proactive role in the relationship with Luc. Gotton runs away from home to instigate their love affair and, when the German invasion underlines Luc's infirmity, it is she who controls her own destiny. Within the limitations of this Catholic vision of good and evil, in which death is viewed as atonement for sin, the male protagonist remains an impotent figure.

The issue of the non-combatant male emasculated by the condemnatory gaze of the female onlookers forms the heart of Delarue-Mardrus's *Un Roman civil*. The reference to M. d'Hautvières as a man 'traité d'eunuque' (*RC*,252) is particularly apt - for he is a man stripped of his manhood in the eyes of the patriotic female audience. This peripheral character, whose 'disability' gives rise to scepticism, must excuse his civilian attire before the condemnatory glances of his female companions, and the reference to his 'terrible souffle au coeur' becomes his introductory phrase, 'sa défense contre ce regard de guerre, sans équivalent, jusque-là, dans le catalogue des oeillades féminines' (*RC*,252). A photograph of himself in military uniform - 'on s'en sert dans les métros pour ne pas être battu' (*RC*,252) - is his only defence against female censure.

The treatment of M. D'Hautvières further emphasizes the insecurity of the central protagonist Francis, whose physical disability reduces him to the ranks of the 'parents pauvres qu'on n'invitait pas au théâtre de la guerre' (*RC*,200). While his father and brother 'étaient déjà si loin tous deux, loin par la distance et aussi par la forme de leur pensée tout occupée de guerre...' (*RC*,76), Francis is condemned to spend the war on the home front. It is notable that the man unable to join the world conflict outside is driven to fight a personal sexual conflict within the confines of his home: 'Au milieu de la catastrophe universelle, il y avait, dans son âme, cette catastrophe intime, chose insignifiante, si grande pour lui, cependant' (*RC*,195). Elisabeth Clèves becomes 'son ennemie' (*RC*,77) - the female foe who provides a substitute for the German army. For Francis, women have something 'd'involontaire, de presque animal' (*RC*,238), a fitting counterpart to the traditional view of the bestial German army, and Delarue-Mardrus turns Elisabeth's 'yeux de lynx' into a leitmotif which haunts Francis throughout the text.

The novelist does not allow Francis to be an ignominious figure but she assigns him a role in this 'royaume des femmes' in which he remains constantly on the defensive. Throughout his relationship with Elisabeth he seeks respect for his medical skills, taking refuge at the hospital where 'sur le terrain chirurgical, pouvait-il remettre à sa place l'orgueilleuse demoiselle' (*RC*,177). It is one woman in particular who threatens his self-esteem - 'Serait-il donc toujours traité par elle en marmot?' (*RC*,222) - and Delarue-Mardrus frequently emphasizes Francis' infantile behaviour with Elisabeth, long before the reader becomes aware of the unconscious (oedipal) dimension to this mother/son/lover bond. The plot provides the clearest example of a wartime matriarchal society in which the male character remains an outcast, endlessly attempting to justify his presence.

The majority of the tales take the departure of the heroic soldiers for the front as their impetus, and work on the principle that men are absent or fleeting figures in this world behind the lines. In *La Veillée des armes* the servant Marie's realization: 'Quel vide cela ferait dans toutes les maisons, ce départ des hommes!' (*VA*,283) may be uttered in innocence of the sexual overtones, but several writers exploit this factor in their plots. The separation of married couples and the comforts offered by the military brothels appear to condone male sexuality, whilst placing the onus upon women as guardians of morality. Many a wartime pamphlet with a religious tenor reminded young women of their duty to the serving soldiers:

> Die Art des Verkehrs zwischen jungen Männern und Mädchen, die ist doch ganz die Sache der Mädchen... Und wenn dann vielleicht das alte Volkslied traurig dagegen klingt: "Was hilft mir denn mein schöner Garten, wenn andere drin spazieren gehen?", dann muß euer Schatz mit Stolz denken können: "Jedoch die Meine ist eine Reine, an der alleine ich meine Freude hab."[10]

In *Der Kriegsfreiwillige* one of the songs that Ernst hears sung in the barracks is 'Was nützt mir denn ein schönes Mädchen, wenn andere mit spazieren gehen?' (*K*.80). As if in answer, the writers create female characters who are not asexual beings and whose desires threaten the social codes of the day. With their permanent partners trapped behind the walls of the barracks or in the troglodyte world of the trenches, the female characters may emerge as the more fortunate players in the war game. The changing pattern of existence for women whose men are at the front is a recurrent theme in wartime literature, as women are left to rule a 'Herland' behind the lines.

Erich Leed remarks upon the fact that women enjoyed an increase in libido during the war[11] - a fact which is acknowledged but, interestingly, not

exploited by the selected novelists. Although the French writers portray female characters with sexual desires who are not afraid to break with conventions, there is always a sense of restraint prevailing over the actions of the central protagonist. Gotton Connixloo, deprived of tenderness in her childhood, finally fills 'des heures de langueur où le besoin de caresses faisait frémir ses lèvres' (*GC*,16) through the adulterous relationship with Luc, but Mayran creates an ultimately remorseful heroine who finds salvation in death rather than in pleasure.

Jeanne Landre's protagonist Raymonde evidently has few inhibitions and celebrates her sexuality with Jacques:

> Loin d'être gênée de s'être dévêtue devant lui, elle était heureuse des occasions qui lui faisaient mettre, hors de ses robes, ses bras, ses seins, ses épaules, car elle n'ignorait pas que le grand Jacques qui rôdait, invisible, allait poser, sur toutes les parcelles de sa chair, des lèvres dévotieuses. (*PIM*,113-114)

However, Landre restricts the outpouring of desire to the printed page, never allowing the 'lovers' to meet and restraining the relationship within the bounds of fantasy.

In Ida Boy-Ed's *Die Opferschale* Guda is prey to Percy's sexual thrall, and their sexual encounters are depicted as a struggle between the 'knowing' enemy figure and the innocent girl, who strives to resist her natural instincts:

> Sie vergingen sogleich in leidenschaftlicher Begierde nacheinander - mit kühnen, tastenden Händen erfaßte der Mann alle köstlichen Linien dieser holden,jungfräulichen Gestalt - genoß mit einem Rausch von Entzücken ihr Erbeben - spürte voll Triumph die Schauer, die durch ihre Glieder flogen. (*DO*,30)

This is a struggle between desire and propriety in which chastity is not a foregone conclusion, but the heroine's final rejection of the English suitor embodies Ida

Boy-Ed's belief in the ultimate German victory.

On the female-dominated home front of Clara Viebig's *Das rote Meer* the young female characters also suffer from unfulfilled sexual desires. Annemarie, now a lonely widow, is left with her dreams of Rudolf and their shared passion: 'Auf seinen Knien würde sie sitzen, den Arm um seinen Hals legen, ihr heißes Gesicht an das seine schmiegen. Seine schmeichelnde Hand umfaßte sie; immer wieder und wieder küßte er sie' (*DrM*,121) - and her future marriage plans are born of a need which is not purely financial: 'Ich muß nun mal 'nen Mann haben!' (*DrM*,240). Even the aristocratic Lily confesses to her sexual desires and the struggle to restrain herself in Heinz's presence:

> Ich verzehre mich nach dir - mit Leib und Seele - schon damals, schon damals - wärst du nicht fortgegangen - ich wäre dein geworden schon damals! Ich war schwach. Ich bin schwach. (*DrM*,250)

Although monogamous relationships tend to carry the plot, the separation of Elisabeth and Malavent leads to female infidelity in *Un Roman civil*. Elisabeth claims: 'Je lui ai juré avant son départ pour la guerre... Je l'aime' (*RC*,192), but her desire to switch allegiance to Francis is taken before the death of the older rival frees her from her obligations.

The forgetfulness experienced by Colette's fictional friend Valentine offers a particularly extreme example of the phenomenon: 'Figurez-vous...c'est drôle.. J'avais oublié. Oublié la personne civile de mon mari. J'avais oublié, ma parole, qu'il habitait avec moi' (*LHL*,198). It is a theme taken up by Clara Viebig in *Töchter der Hekuba*, where the female character who fully exploits the departure of the soldiers, Minka Dombrowski, reveals her own amnesia symptoms: 'Wenn der Mann zu lange fort ist, gewöhnt man sich zuletzt daran,

man fängt an, zu vergessen' (*TdH*,64). Although Viebig initially bestows some sympathy on Minka as the kind-hearted, hard-working wife of a violent man, she does not condone her subsequent adulterous actions. While other women despair at the lack of news from the front, Minka regards it as justification to forget her maternal duties and her marriage vows as the outbreak of war frees her from the jealous gaze of her husband. Returning soldiers in search of pleasure during their period of leave are happy to oblige her. Even when alcohol makes Minka sentimental about her spouse, it is an admirer who offers a consoling shoulder.

Viebig never exonerates Minka's adulterous behaviour, arousing some compassion for the cuckolded husband who finds his wife 'in flagrante delicto' but chooses not to take retribution. Together with the foolish Frau Siebenrat in *Das rote Meer*, who betrays her husband by dallying with a handsome soldier in the woods, Minka receives the author's unspoken condemnation. While Minka, her attention to danger diverted by a passing soldier, is crushed by a passing train, Frau Siebenrat inadvertently causes her own death by losing count of the tablets she takes to obscure her misery. With the death of one unfaithful woman per novel, the temptations are evident, but it is clear that adultery does not pay in Viebig's code of moral conduct.

An even greater threat to the stability of patriarchal society comes with the permanent removal of male characters from the scene, be they spouses or fathers - sons, as we shall see in Chapter 5, belong to a different category. In an age when men are dying in their thousands each day, it is easy for a writer to remove a male figure from the fictional framework and to play credible games with the fate of the protagonists. The female creators of wartime literature have exceptional fictional powers over life and death and a plausible way of killing

heroes for a patriotic end, or removing unwanted characters with a well-aimed bullet.

The sense of instability comes with the swiftness with which women find male substitutes, or in the relative ease with which they are consoled. As Rachilde is quick to explain in *Dans le puits*: 'La foudre est tombée là-dessus en dispersant les hommes. Il y a tout lieu de croire que les femmes se consolent, certaines *veuves joyeuses*, avec les *embusqués*, d'ailleurs pas dangereux' (*DP*,33).

Both Helene von Mühlau and Ida Boy-Ed free their heroines from unsuccessful bonds with a telegram from the army. For Maria in *Der Kriegsfreiwillige* the lover who has misused her is to die in battle, and her sorrow is mingled with the realization that he would never have become 'ein guter, lieber Lebensgefährte' (*K*,216). Berthold Leuckmer in *Die Opferschale* is also clearly expendable, and the narrator leaves the reader in no doubt that his death is an escape for his long-suffering wife: 'Sie wußte: sie hatte nichts verloren! Denn vor scharfer Prüfung hielt der Glaube nicht stand, daß er später ein anderer geworden wäre' (*DO*,227-228). There is a sense of poetic justice in Ida Boy-Ed's nationalistic plot which is absent from von Mühlau's novel.

Although Clara Viebig does not manipulate death as a mere literary device to move along the plot, she does create a hierarchy of values in which suffering is experienced on a sliding scale. In Viebig's novels the son takes precedence over the husband, the death of a child outweighing the killing of a spouse. In affirmation of this philosophy, Viebig's two young war widows have found willing replacements by the end of the second novel; and Gertrud, who once believed 'einmal hatte sie einen Liebsten gehabt, dem hatte sie alles gegeben - Herz, Ehre - , nun konnte sie nicht noch einmal soviel verschenken' (*DrM*,68) finds happiness with the soldier who brings her confirmation of her lover's death.

The contrasting reactions of two young widows are portrayed through the characters of Lili and Annemarie. Lili, who is the more heroic figure, agrees to marry Heinz after an inner battle between love and social conventions, but the certainty of her happiness with a new partner is never called into question. In comparison, her friend Annemarie loses little time in finding a second husband once the novelty of playing the sorrowful widow has begun to pall: 'Er [Rudolf] war der erste gewesen, sie hatte geglaubt, ihn über alle Maßen zu lieben; aber was weiß man denn vom Leben und von der Liebe, wenn man achtzehn Jahre ist!' (*DrM*,245), but her actions smack of opportunism. While her love for Rudolf is accepted in its youthful innocence, her choice of a replacement is more carefully calculated, as an older, richer industrialist takes preference over the young, handsome, but financially insecure soldier. Although Viebig makes it clear that there is no reason for the young girl to survive on memories of past happiness, Hedwig Bertholdi's observation of a merry widow at the train station acts as a timely warning:

> Vielleicht zwanzig Jahre, und schon glänzten an ihrem Ringfinger zwei Trauringe. Die Witwentracht machte sie noch schöner, und sie schien das zu wissen. Ihr Blick glänzte, ihre Lippe lachte. Sie unterhielt sich lebhaft mit einem anderen Feldgrauen, einen noch jungen Offizier, der nur für sie Augen hatte. Die würde nicht lange Witwe bleiben, das war ihr gleich klargeworden. (*TdH*,118)

The death and hurried replacement of the spouse undermines the value of the marriage vows, the words 'Bis daß der Tod euch scheidet' taking on a somewhat clichéd poignancy. The rapid exchange of partners threatens the moral order of a society accustomed to the exchange of women, the transformation of men into expendable commodities overturning the system.

A further upheaval in society's traditional structure is found in the shifting

numerical balance between the sexes. As Siegfried asks in *Die unsere Hoffnung sind*, how will Isolde find a husband: 'Wo alle jungen Männer eben totgeschossen werden'? (*UH*,167) - a similar attitude to the grandmother's despairing reaction in *Der Kriegsfreiwillige* when she questions Maria's future: 'Ihre ganze Jugend hat sie verplempert, und wer weiß, ob sie nun überhaupt einen Mann findet, wo doch so viele totgeschossen werden!' (*K*,43). Yet the writers' response is not to leave the heroines inconsolable - it is clear that both will survive without husbands, as will Katharina in *Die Opferschale* and Raymonde in *...puis il mourut*. This new breed of independent women is most clearly illustrated by Elisabeth Clèves in *Un Roman civil*, whose desire for independence leads to a rejection of the state of matrimony: 'Cela déplaisait à ma liberté. Il y a dans le mariage une convention, une officialité, quelque chose qui n'existe que pour les autres' (*RC*,215).

The effects will also be felt by future generations, as the patriarchal system is disrupted by the absence - temporary or permanent - of the father from the family setting. It is a disruption of the Lacanian Symbolic order in which the Name of the Father dominates: 'C'est dans *le nom du père* qu'il nous faut reconnâitre le support de la fonction symbolique qui, depuis l'orée des temps historiques, identifie sa personne à la figure de la loi.'[12] Even Helene Christaller, the upholder of tradition and religious values, raises the possibility of the soldier Konrad's demise as a means of giving Isolde sole possession of the baby she has adopted in his absence. When Peter asks: 'Du, Isolde, ist es nicht gefährlich, daß du zur Mutterliebe kommst, ohne die Gattenliebe zu kennen?' she replies: 'Zur Mutterliebe brauchte ich nicht zu kommen, die lag in mir schon von jeher, und ist nun aufgeblüht' (*UH*,116). In her surrogate role there is no sexual desire for a partner and no requirement for a paternal influence:

> Und bis der Krieg erst aus war, der konnte jahrelang dauern, und was konnte alles geschehen. Der Vater konnte fallen in Rußland. Es schoß ihr heiß ins Gesicht, sie fühlte den Wunsch in sich aufsteigen, daß es so geschähe und schämte sich im gleichen Augenblick des frevelhaften Gedankens. (*UH*,187)

In Christaller's society of *Die unsere Hoffnung sind* conventional principles triumph in the end, and Isolde rues her earlier desires, finding the perfect solution by falling in love with Konrad and contemplating married family life. However, Konrad's fate hangs in the balance at the conclusion of the novel, and the prospect of his death as an answer to Isolde's desire for single motherhood has raised its head.

Nor is this an isolated incident within the wartime plots. In *L'Oubliée* Denise accepts the loss of her fiancé by seeking consolation with the orphaned refugee she adopts; Ida Boy-Ed's heroine Katharina and her cousin in *Die Opferschale* are widows who find comfort in their maternal role as the trustees of Germany's future generation; Gertrud and Frau Krüger, as mother and grandmother respectively, fight for possession of the illegitimate boy in *Töchter der Hekuba*. The texts illustrate that the war had overturned 'the rule of patrilineal succession'.[13] Women were now the guardians of the sons and daughters of the nation who will be raised without the Name of the Father in a matriarchal society which has watched the men being slaughtered on the battlefield.

While the female protagonists develop in their new independence, the novelists provide a regressive setting for the male characters. The confident soldiers who marched away to war are now transformed into weak and vulnerable figures, desirous of female companionship rather than eager to escape. In *Die unsere Hoffnung sind* Peter's friendship with Isolde no longer satisfies him: 'ich habe mich wohl verändert draußen, mir ist zum Bewußtsein gekommen, daß mir

das nicht genug ist, wenn Isolde nur meine gute Freundin ist' (*UH*,127). When Isolde rejects him, leaving him disappointed, he is returned to a childlike status: 'Eine Sehnsucht wurde mächtig, sich an die Brust einer Mutter zu werfen und einmal weinen zu können' (*UH*,130). Even the innocent Hiller in *Der Kriegsfreiwillige* cries: 'Warum hat er niemanden, der an ihn denkt, der ihm schreibt' (*K*,105) and is troubled by his solitary situation: 'Nie im Leben hat er so viel von Liebe und Mädchen und Küssen singen und reden hören, als seit diesen paar Wochen in der Kaserne' (*K*,136).

In a humorous aside in *La Veillée des armes*, in which people in the street discuss the war in an early phase of bellicosity, one man protests against the idea of women at the front: 'Des femmes?...Vous ne voudriez pas!...Une si belle occasion d'être un peu tranquilles, entre hommes...' (*VA*,134). It is an attitude which is resoundingly crushed by Jeanne Landre's hero Jacques, for whom the lack of female company is a source of bitter complaint: 'Trop souvent il déplorait de vivre dans ce milieu exclusivement masculin, et c'était, parmi les duretés de son existence actuelle, ce qui lui semblait le plus rude à subir' (*PIM*,7).

The soldier's incapacitation at the front line provides an opportunity for the 'marraines de guerre' to play their part, with the 'marraine/filleul' relationship offering a further example of the shift in stereotypical gender roles. Reduced to the status of 'godsons', reliant upon their godmothers for socks and chocolates, the soldiers become the innocent recipient of presents depicted in *Die unsere Hoffnung sind*, or the vulnerable objects of sexual desire - a topic exploited for its eroticism by Jeanne Landre in *...puis il mourut*.

Jeanne Landre initially sanctions the power of her female protagonist, for it is the soldier, troubled by loneliness, who finds himself in the inferior role in the male/female relationship. When Raymonde responds to Jacques's plea for a

female correspondent, to fulfil 'cet immense désir qu'il avait d'une influence féminine près de lui' (*PIM*,6-7), she already knows something of his rank and age, but writes: 'Pour vous l'énigme est plus troublante: tant de Jézabel ont un sacré tempérament!' (*PIM*,3). The man remains susceptible to the caprices of his 'marraine', for she is cossetted in the comforts of home, while he is dependent upon her to ease his misery: 'Je tremble, Raymonde, à l'idée que vous vous amusez peut-être' (*PIM*,45).

The effect of the segregation of the sexes is reflected in the content of the letters. Jacques's solitary life in the trenches contrasts with Raymonde's social whirl and his angry accusation: 'Elle fréquentait donc le monde entier!' (*PIM*,86) is followed by a description of a lonely night on the battlefield to arouse the reader's sympathy. Jacques quickly loses his initial superior status as the serving soldier, informing Raymonde that 'je ne serai que le satellite de votre esprit, et mon seul éclat ne viendra que de votre lumière' (*PIM*,188). Towards the end of the novel he has taken over the subservient role which Raymonde first allotted herself, as he describes himself as 'ton esclave' (*PIM*,236). Estranged from ordinary life, the former philanderer appears at his most helpless in his dealings with the opposite sex.

Raymonde's letters - the link with a woman and with home - are 'une manne, une rosée, une charité' (*PIM*,9) for a lonely soldier living an 'existence parfaitement chaste' (*PIM*,23) who asks her only 'de personnifier à distance ses rêves, ses désirs, d'écouter la grande tendresse qui se lamentait en lui' (*PIM*,31). Quickly the desires become more sexually orientated, as frustrated sexuality fuels Jacques's more explicit fantasies:

> Je sais tout de toi, ou je crois tout savoir, je te parle, je t'appelle, je te prends, je vois tes yeux qui tournoient sous ma caresse, ton corps sinueux

> qu'ébranle mes assauts, ta tête qui roule sur l'oreiller, tes lèvres qui balbutient des appels, des cris, des supplications, tes belles hanches qui houlent, tes pieds qui se crispent et dont les ongles crissent sur la toile des draps... (*PIM*,204-205)

Jacques is writing from the battlefield 'où les conventions sont mortes, où l'on peut tout oser, puisque les audaces, même excessives, n'entraînent rien' (*PIM*,44), but it is the woman in the freedom of the home front who may take the greater liberties.

It is when these liberated women come face to face with the returning soldiers, transformed after the trauma of the trenches, that the extent of the shift in gender relations comes to light. 'Hineinzuschauen in die Seele der Heimkehrenden, das sollte vor allem Frauensache sein',[14] wrote Margarete Henschke in *Der Krieg und die Frauen* in 1915. The contemporary war novels reveal, often unwittingly, the difficulties of that task. As Rachilde writes in *Dans le puits*: 'Le héros digne de ce nom est toujours celui qui ne revient pas. Que fera-t-on de ceux qui n'ont pas été des héros?' (*DP*,255). The writers may cope with the eulogies for the brave dead in the patriotic texts, but labour to convey the experiences of the men who survive.

When soldiers cross the lines into Herland, they are no longer the same men who marched away to war. The women writers of 1914-1918 strive to comprehend this transformation, attempting to convey the repercussions of life 'over there' on the community 'over here'. The problems inherent in representing the effect of events which lie outside a novelist's frame of reference are manifested by her inability to escape the constraints of the masculinist code.

The pre-battle setting of *La Veillée des armes* does not permit war to take its toll, but Tinayre allows François his moments of emotion before his departure. However, in the patriotic atmosphere the novelist strives to compartmentalize the

pain which François disguises from his wife Simone: 'Jamais elle ne mesurerait la souffrance de celui qui ne voulait pas, dans la fièvre de leur adieu, s'affaiblir et l'affaiblir elle-même, en s'attendrissant' (*VA*,270). In the final scenes, Tinayre offers the reader a glimpse behind the man's stoical façade which the woman is not meant to see: 'Elle ne savait pas, la bien-aimée, par quelles alternatives de courage et de faiblesse il avait passé, lui, le faux stoïque, le faux impassible!' (*VA*,270).

Yet, even in this concession to human frailty behind the military mask - and there is no honour in 'easy' patriotism - both male and female characters have carefully designated roles. In Chapter 19, as François sobs in Simone's arms, Tinayre allows the patriotic front to waver, but not to crumble. While granting her hero a level of humanity, it is clear that he may not step over the border into coward's territory: 'Certes, il ne renia pas une seconde le vieil idéal d'honneur qui avait, en lui, la force d'un instinct; pas une seconde sa volonté ne fléchit' (*VA*,274), is the narrator's reassurance to the reader that France is safe in the hands of such men.

Jeanne Landre shares Tinayre's uncomfortable reaction to male tears. François sheds 'ces larmes d'homme, rares et lentes, qui coulent à peine et font plus de mal que le sang d'une blessure' in *La Veillée des armes* (*VA*,274), while Jacques in *...puis il mourut* 'ne se rappelait plus, dans cet asile, s'il avait jamais pleuré, pleuré de ces horribles larmes d'homme, brûlantes, amères, solitaires et rares' (*PIM*,196). The repetition of the adjective 'rares' in both texts indicates the writers' belief in the singularity of such male expressions of suffering.

The German writers also express a similar need to excuse the emotional male. When Thomas, the symbol of German manhood in *Die Opferschale*, returns wounded from the war, he weeps with the acknowledgement: 'Seltsam,

wie leicht jetzt Männer weinten' (*DO*,277). In a later scene when he rejoices at Guda's rejection of Percy, he 'legte die Hand über die Augen - er hatte noch nicht die Kraft zu mannhafter Beherrschung' (*DO*,294). The narrator feels the need to interject, the 'noch nicht' reminding the reader of Thomas's war wounds, as if to assure concerned individuals that the 'normal' situation will soon be restored. While Boy-Ed's female characters give vent to their feelings 'mit dem weiblichen Vorrecht auf die Träne, die zu verbergen niemand von ihnen forderte' (*DO*,354), the writer is not prepared to grant her hero the same free rein, fearing that male emotion is equivalent to a loss of status.

Helene von Mühlau and Helene Christaller are somewhat more sympathetic to the rejection of male/female expectations of 'manliness'. Ernst Hiller, tired and depressed from his duty in the barracks, is overcome with emotion: 'Tränen fließen ihm aus den Augen. Die Hände haben sich zu Fäusten geballt - weh, furchtbar weh ist ihm ums Herz' (*K*,103), but his sympathetic treatment is to earn the reader's compassion rather than disdain.

When Alf, home on leave, asks forgiveness for his emotions in *Die unsere Helden sind*: 'Man wird so schrecklich gefühlvoll da draußen', his fellow soldier Konrad replies: 'Darüber schämen Sie sich doch ja nicht, das ist vielleicht das Beste, was wir aus dem Felde heimbringen, und wehe, wenn es uns verloren ginge' (*UH*,176). Christaller, in many ways the most conventional and patriarchal of the writers, is the only one to openly accept the positive aspects of breaking the stoical mould.

Evidently, the most dramatic rejection of propaganda heroes occurs when wounded soldiers return crippled from the front. It is the woman's turn to show strength and 'trösten, ermutigen, aufrichten,' as Margarete Henschke advises in *Der Krieg und die Frauen*,[15] and it is in the treatment of death and mutilation that

the writers show their true colours, as well as their potential to encapsulate the consequences of the war experience.

The sense of role reversal and transfer of power is most evident in the depiction of wounded men. In *Les Heures longues* Colette intersperses the horrific wartime anecdote of 'La Tête' - in which a man who has lost half his face has to walk to the hospital because the other soldiers carried in the ambulances 'étaient tellement plus malades que moi' (*LHL*,17) - with patriotic eulogies to the brave soldiers:

> Je n'ai vu de tristes, dans une salle où l'on compte, pour douze hommes, vingt et un bras et vingt jambes, que les gens bien portants, les passants, les visiteurs... Nous n'aurons pas à consoler, autrement que par notre amour, notre gratitude, la foule glorieuse de nos jeunes amputés.
> (*LHL*,18-19)

Colette, in patriotic mood, needs to temper the horror with patriotic bombast. Margarete Böhme adopts a similar perspective in *Kriegsbriefe der Familie Wimmel*, extracting limited propaganda value from nurse Ellen's description of her patients:

> es ist geradezu wundervoll, wie klaglos und geduldig auch die Schwerverwundeten ihre Leiden und Schmerzen ertragen, und wie rasch bei ihnen wieder ein unversiegbarer Strom urwüchsigen Frohsinns durchbricht, sobald sie sich einigermaßen wieder rühren können.
> (*KW*,126)

The bitter pill of suffering is immediately sugared by shallow evocations of heroism. Pain is nullified by patriotic platitudes and there is a reluctance to shake the stoical façade.

The legacy of the trenches is viewed as an outwardly aging and internally regressive experience. In *Töchter der Hekuba* the cuckolded husband,

Dombrowski, first chooses not to take retribution upon his unfaithful wife when he catches sight of his appearance in a mirror:

> Einer war ausgezogen von hier, der hatte braune Haare, einen braunen Schnurrbart. Aber der Kerl da im Spiegel war ja so grau, ganz grau... Und so ein Mannsbild, so ein alter Kerl - vergraut, verstaubt, verschrumpelt - so einer, ja was wollte denn so einer hier? Paßte der zu der schönen Minka, der jungen Frau? (*TdH*,191)

Not only have the women changed in their independent existence, the soldiers have also undergone a transformation, making the reunion of the sexes fraught with uncertainties and misjudgments.

When Thomas, the wounded lawyer in *Die Opferschale*, returns from the front he is also described as an apparently aged soldier:

> Da kam an der Krücke und von Karen und Tiny gestützt ein alter Mann... Und was für Augen hatte er! Augen mit unirdischem Ausdruck. Furchtbarer Ernst war in ihnen und ein geheimnisvolles Licht. Augen, die das Entsetzen gesehen hatten und den Tod, vor denen immer noch gräßliche Bilder standen, deutlicher als alles, was das Leben ihnen wieder zeigen wollte. (*DO*,276)

The soldier's suffering is visualized on a one-dimensional level, with little attempt - perhaps because of insufficient comprehension - at deeper analysis. In the patriotic atmosphere of Boy-Ed's novel, Thomas recovers after a short period of convalescence: 'Seine Farbe wurde besser, die scharfen Furchen glätteten sich. Sein Angesicht gewann die Jugend zurück' (*DO*,283). In Camille Mayran's *L'Oubliée* Adrienne, remarking upon the war's effect upon her patients, claims that 'dans l'excès de la souffrance, on change, que le passé pâlit' (*LO*,246), but there is no attempt to enter the psyche of the soldier Philippe, and his character motivation is never fully explained. The psychological issue of male suffering and

weakness is tackled on a superficial level and, consequently, the writers fail to produce a convincing insight into male reactions to their injuries.

Mutilation itself is demoralizing, lacking the nobility of 'gefallen' or 'tombé sur le champ d'honneur' and a constant reminder of the human waste of war. Amputation, with its overtones of emasculation, chips away at the heroic images. 'Le sommeil libère la plainte qu'ils retiennent tout le long du jour par orgueil. Le pleurétique geint régulièrement, d'une voix douce, comme une femme' (*LHL*,12) writes Colette in *Les Heures longues*. The expressions of anguish appear to 'feminize' the soldiers, stripping away the men's heroic masks and upsetting the balance between the sexes in which the masculinist code does not countenance weakness.

In *Die Opferschale* the man-hunting Tiny notes this same disturbance in traditional gender relations. In elevating the soldiers she nurses to a holy and heroic status, she reduces them to a state of androgyne.

> Und mir kam es so vor, als seien es keine Männer - verstehen Sie - Männer, die man so ansieht, ob sie anziehend sind, ob man ihnen gefällt - ob sie wohl verheiratet sind, ob man sie selbst möchte - Menschen waren sie nur - Nein, auch nicht - Helden und Märtyrer. (*DO*,258)

With their hollow prestige as heroes and martyrs the soldiers have attained a pure, almost saintly aura, which divests them of their sexuality.

Death - with its heroic connotations - or the decision to leave male protagonists to fight another day, is easier than depicting soldiers returning scarred by their experiences in the trenches. In the main, these wounded figures are given peripheral roles - mere background statistics to add to the sense of authenticity without upsetting the patriotic balance. Beyond the effect upon wartime morale there is also the question of the writers' ability to articulate the

effects of what is an inherently male experience.

Only Delarue-Mardrus and Clara Viebig take the risk of portraying central characters as wounded victims. However, in *Un Roman civil* the injury to the elder Doctor Malavent is treated as a feature of the understated oedipal relationship which exists between Elisabeth, Malavent and Francis. It serves as a device to move along the plot, as well as a commentary upon the tragedy of war.

Before the father's return, the young couple have adopted the mother/child roles. Francis's initial hatred of Elisabeth is described by the narrator as 'une antipathie d'enfant' (*RC*,9), as he struggles to come to terms with his manhood; and she responds with a humiliating maternal attitude: 'Vous êtes si enfant!' (*RC*,171). Their relationship turns from dislike into passion, until Francis discovers that he has fallen in love with the woman who is to be his (step)mother - and 'celle qu'il avait élue se révélait à lui sacrée, intangible' (*RC*,196). The father is transformed from the good parent to 'l'autre' (*RC*,217) - the obstacle to his son's happiness.

When Malavent returns blinded from the war he retains his belief in the patriotic reaction of women eager to care for the wounded soldiers: 'Ce n'est pas parce que j'aurai perdu mes yeux, ou plutôt que je les aurai donnés à mon pays, que quelque chose sera changé entre nous, je suppose?' (*RC*,279) Thus, the act of betrayal is the final blow to Malavent's battered body. His blindness - a symbol of fear of castration[16] in oedipal terms - has led to his feeling of emasculation: 'Je lui apportais un reste d'homme, elle m'apportait un reste d'amour' (*RC*,290).

The inspirational response, in which the soldier returns to a hero's welcome, is subverted by a plot in which the wounded man loses his lover to his son/rival. Viewed through the eyes of Francis, his guilt-ridden son, the father

has become the victim of war, rather than the victor:

> Ainsi, tandis que, perdu dans l'horreur des tueries, un homme fait avec bonheur son grand devoir, lui, Francis le boiteux, Francis le réformé, Francis l'incapable accomplit lentement, lâchement l'oeuvre de voler cet homme dans ce qu'il a de plus cher et de plus sacré. (*RC*,243-244)

In taking away the woman his father loved, Francis has caused a 'troisième blessure' - the one which will kill his father. Malavent dies in silence: 'jamais plus il n'avait parlé de sa *troisième blessure*' (*RC*,300), adopting the role of the mute victim, powerless to retaliate. This added symbolism transposes the suffering, distancing the reader from Malavant's pain.

Delarue-Mardrus spares Elisabeth the option of marrying a wounded soldier, which is one of the personal sacrifices suggested to women by Malita von Rundstedt in *Der Schützengraben des deutschen Mädchens*: 'eine Ehre wirds ihr sein, so einen Helden heiraten zu dürfen, dem man es gleich ansieht, daß er fürs Vaterland gekämpft hat.'[17] However, despite her own rejection of patriotic eulogies, Clara Viebig takes up this theme in *Das rote Meer*, as Lili Rossi willingly accepts the proposal when Heinz returns blinded from the war.

Viebig's novels eschew jingoistic sentiment and attempt to tackle the alienation of the wounded man. With the loss of his sight Heinz initially feels unworthy of his fiancée. His injury has caused a psychological emasculation, and he is unable to respond to her sexual overtures:

> Er ließ sich drücken und streicheln, und als sie ihn mit Küssen überschüttete, ließ er auch die über sich ergeben. Er selber rührte sich nicht, er war wie aus Holz. (*DrM*,226)

Viebig strives to express Heinz's agony by means of his paralysis, his

estrangement from the society around him illustrated by his (apparently castratory) blindness.

A similar twist to the plot is found in Camille Mayran's *L'Oubliée* when Philippe transforms his physical mutilation into an obstacle between himself and his fiancée: 'Vous n'auriez peut-être pas voulu de moi, Denise; vous voyez comme ils m'ont arrangé' (*LO*,245). Mayran insists that the betrayal is on the part of the male protagonist - for Denise is unafraid of Philippe's potential wounds, having 'trop de joie de le savoir vivant' (*LO*,242). It is Philippe who feels 'brisé, tari pour toujours' (*LO*,248) and able to accept only the love of a woman who came to care for him in his altered state. Denise, who was unable to deal with dressings for her dying mother, is cast aside for the nurse who tended his wounds.

While Heinz in *Das rote Meer* is won over by the force of Lili's unchanging love, Philippe finds consolation in an alternative power base. In his relationship with Denise he regarded himself as the guardian of his gentle fiancée. Now he is in need of protection, seeking strength from others rather than offering help himself. The nurse brings him that comfort: 'il parlait de sa profonde tranquillité, de sa force, de la beauté de ses gestes. Il m'expliqua qu'il avait trouvé en elle la guérison de l'âme' (*LO*,248).

The symbolic castration implied by the loss of his limb has evidently been reversed in the care of his new love - for Philippe has fathered a child since his wounding. As Denise explains to Adrienne: 'Moi, je n'avais à lui apporter qu'une vie déjà bien blessée; comment l'aurais-je guéri?' (*LO*,248) Once the champion of his fragile fiancée, the wounded soldier has found his support in the arms of the potent figure of the nurse.

Writers tackle the complex emotional responses of the wounded soldier

with the vocabulary of their traditional 'feminine' experience of the maternal bond: 'Als kräftige Männer sind sie ausgezogen, und jetzt bedürfen sie Wartung und Pflege wie kleine Kinder'.[18] Yet it is a powerful image of men reduced to a childlike status at the mercy of the overbearing mother figure. In Helene Christaller's short story *Die Deutsche*, the patriotic Clara cares for the wounded soldiers and 'sie reichte ihnen die Mahlzeit und fütterte manch einen, der sich nicht rühren konnte, wie sie einst ihre kleinen Kinder gefüttert hatte'.[19] Strong males have become weak and helpless figures, immobilized by their wounds and reliant upon the clemency of the woman who dominates their lives.

The resultant struggle for control forms part of the ensuing gender conflict. In *Die unsere Hoffnung sind* the soldier Peter fears the loss of his sight and consoles himself:

> wenn ihn je solch ein Unglück traf, war es nicht gut, daß es Frauen gab, die durch die Süßigkeit der Mütterlichkeit über den Mangel hinüber kamen? Aber seine ganze Männlichkeit empörte sich gegen eine solche Rolle. (*UH*,117-118)

The outer physical need is at variance with the inner belief in hierarchical gender roles.

In *Die Opferschale* Thomas's injury brings with it the fear of loss of self-control reminiscent of his infancy: 'Man ist so hilflos, ist wie ein Kind, das macht ungeduldig, erträgt sich schwerer, als die Schmerzen' (*DO*,252). When Katharina comes to take Thomas home she puts her arm around him to shield him from the crowd - the soldier relinquishing his role as defender of the female sex to find himself in need of her protection. Margarete Böhme maintains this accepted role play when nurse Ellen describes the wounded men as her 'große Kinder' (*KW*,131).

These scenes offer a consistent perception of the oscillating power relations between the sexes. The changing male/female relationship is presented as a return to the mother/child bond as the man is transformed from strong soldier to sick child.

Camille Mayran's *L'Oubliée* also illustrates how the traditional male/female power relationship is overturned by the nurses who tend to the needs of the wounded soldier. The idyllic image of the gentle nurse has another facet, leading to the figure who is regarded with a mixture of admiration and trepidation in male novels of the period and symbolized by the threatening figure in Foringer's poster. The treatment of the character of the nurse is, therefore, one of the most striking paradoxes in this body of literature. The wounded men lie at the mercy of the female sex as women exploit their potential wartime psychological advantage, enjoying the freedom and power that the profession offers.

As men thronged to join the army in the early patriotic scenes, so women rush to the Red Cross for their own mobilization. The extent of their fervour is a popular theme in the texts, since for the bourgeois heroines it is the most obvious form of war service. Women are clamouring to join the throng. As Rachilde is to learn when she makes her way to the hospital with a 'certificat de grand médecin' (*DP*,73), the soldiers are surrounded by 'trop de femmes du monde et tellement de jeunes filles! Ce qui nous manque... ah! ça, ça manque toujours, c'est de l'or' (*DP*,74). This same situation is reflected in Sophie's comments in *Kriegsbriefe der Familie Wimmel*: 'die leitenden Stellen gaben zu verstehen, daß ihnen mit Geldbeiträgen mehr gedient sei, als mit dem Massenangebot unbezahlter Arbeitskräfte, die anderen, auf den Erwerb angewiesenen Frauen die Existenz erschwerten' (*KW*,41). Helene von Mühlau also comments upon the

surplus nurses through the voice of a minor character: 'An Ärzten ist Mangel, an Plegerinnen Überfluß. Die Wachtmeistersfrau seufzt: "Es müßte einmal einen Frauenkrieg geben!"' (*K*,185) The hospital plays a key role in this matriarchal society behind the lines.

The metamorphosis of young men into heroes with the donning of the military garb is mirrored by the transformation of women into Red Cross nurses. For the female characters, nursing is a form of military duty which provides a uniform without the accompanying sense of uniformity. The women of *Un Roman civil* may desire to serve their country, but it is not enough to be employed in the kitchens where the work is 'sans prestige' (*RC*,75). They achieve both status and a new-found sense of freedom as they put on 'leur costume d'infirmière, dont elles avaient envie comme une première communiante souhaite ses mousselines. Le féminin aimera toujours ce qui frise le déguisement' writes Delarue-Mardrus (*RC*,103).

Boy-Ed takes up a similar theme in *Die Opferschale* when the fickle Tiny proves her doubters wrong by developing into a responsible nurse and escaping from her old ways, so that 'in ihrem Gesicht war allerlei Neues, was man nicht verstand' (*DO*,255). In wearing the uniform, the young woman throws a cloak over her past life: 'Sie war unpersönlich geworden, auch sie, wie Ungezählte, die ihr ganzes Wesen dem Dienst des Krieges hingegeben' (*DO*,275). By veiling their personality women were partially freed from the peacetime conventions which restricted the female sex.

The eighth chapter of *Un Roman civil* deals with this first stage of the transformation, as a crowd of eager ladies meet at the home of Madame Deville with the intention of joining the Red Cross. The women who gather for medical training form a 'foule chaude, hérissée de plumes, d'aigrettes, de rubans et de

bouquets' (*RC*,72) - an inauspicious sight, and the butt of the novelist's humour. The first 'dame importante' called up to demonstrate her knowledge begins to tremble 'si fort que les fleurs violettes de sa capote dansèrent au bout de leurs tiges de laiton' (*RC*,78) until she attempts to perform an injection and 'les fleurs de la capote entrèrent en convulsion, et toutes les têtes de l'assistance se détournèrent à la fois, parmi divers petits cris d'épouvante' (*RC*,81). This 'invasion subite des grands papillons blancs... la bande de novices laïques' (*RC*,128) contrasts with the established nurses of the religious orders who run the hospital.

The metamorphosis of this band of women from a group of enthusiastic but incapable fools into the competent ladies 'usées par ce métier de servante qui n'était pas prévu pour elles!' (*RC*,205) forms a central theme of *Un Roman civil*, with the weaker characters enhancing the prestige of the heroine Elisabeth. Francis' attempts to undermine Elisabeth's nursing ambitions with the snub: 'Quand on a des syncopes comme vous en avez,on ne se mêle pas de soigner les blessés!' (*RC*,69) is countered by his adversary's calm response to an injection: 'Ce n'est pas la peine d'avoir peur comme ça, je ne suis pas douillette' (*RC*,80). In this practice session before the patients arrive, the woman steps outside the barriers which Francis, the misogynist, has erected for her.

As 'les peureux disparaissaient un à un' (*RC*,96), the nurses who are left are the competent figures who win Francis' admiration: 'Ainsi chacune de ces femmes, pour faire son devoir de Française, était sortie de son égoïsme, sortie de sa caste, sortie de son trou' (*RC*,130). The bitterness with which Francis ridiculed women as 'ces réformées de naissance' (*RC*,73), is, therefore, matched by the extent of his admiration when he realizes: 'Elles étaient à la guerre, ces petites, comme les soldats' (*RC*,176). This admission by the misogynist who

suffers under his own status as a 'réformé' is a preliminary sign of the changing power play between the sexes.

Although Helene Christaller continues to work with a patriarchal premise, her portrayal of a devoted nurse promotes the woman to an elevated status previously reserved for the male protagonists. The nurse comes to Alf's aid and 'scheute sich nicht, mit all dem Schmutz in Berührung zu kommen und hatte etwas so Fröhliches in ihrem Wesen, daß Alf das Gefühl hatte, nun sei alles gut und überstanden, weil deutsche Frauen sie nun pflegten und betreuten' (*UH*,144). The honour reserved for the German army in the preceding chapters is now attributed to the band of women who are also in the service of the Fatherland.

It is when the wounded soldiers arrive that the swing of power becomes apparent, with male characters now in the passive roles. Although she avows that many Red Cross nurses are dedicated and competent, the pacifist Marcelle Capy claims in *Une Voix de femme dans la mêlée* that there are also 'ces femmes délicates et coquettes'[20] who are causing a scandal at the hospital bedside, echoing Malita von Rundstedt's censure of German women who abuse the nurse's uniform and strike up relationships with men near the front, even with the enemy prisoners.[21] The wounded soldiers in their beds are surrounded by a band of women eager to lay their hands upon them.

In Jeanne Landre's *...puis il mourut* Raymonde is disillusioned in her desire to do her duty by the scenes which face her at the hospital: 'Des petites chicanes féminines l'éloignaient pour l'instant des lits d'agonie autour desquels naissent des intrigues, des jalousies, des petits romans mesquins, grotesques, amoindrissants' (*PIM*,28-29). On the one extreme are the dedicated nurses who, in Rachilde's opinion, possess 'encore plus de courage, certes, que de coquetterie' (*DP*,107), whilst on the other is the 'poilu' who could 'raconter les

histoires sur les dames de la Croix Rouge!' (*DP*,229). In the hospital of *Un Roman civil* the real nuns in the nursing order, who are 'promues *majors*' for the course of the hostilities, mingle strangely with the 'le faux couvent de la Croix-Rouge' and 'des femmes de harem' (*RC*,105-106) who have taken no vow of chastity.

In *Die Opferschale* Ida Boy-Ed sends Tiny to the Red Cross to the accompaniment of her mother's protests: 'Dich reizt nur das Abenteuerliche dabei. Du denkst an interessante verwundete Offiziere. Und an junge Ärzte. Sonst bist du doch nicht so aufopfernd' (*DO*,187). Not all women enter the wards with their hearts set solely on performing good works, but rather to look for a husband among the ranks of men unable to flee from their advances. Such an issue is exploited in Mayran's tale *L'Oubliée*, for the nurse who wins the heart of the invalid Philippe is both an available object for the soldier's troubled affections and a willing participant in the romance. Nurse Adrienne, the friend who listens with anger to Denise's sad tale, remembers the adoring gaze of a patient: 'Est-ce que ce n'est pas tout de même vrai que la souffrance vous change quelquefois? qu'une sensibilité remuée à de certaines profondeurs est prête pour des émotions et des passions nouvelles?' (*LO*,247). However, she cannot deny the fact that Philippe, in his wounded state, was a sitting target: 'Ils s'étaient aimés; peut-être même était-ce le coeur de la jeune fille qui s'était ému le premier...' (*LO*,266).

The figure of the nurse continues to break down the conventional barriers, serving as an inspiration for several of the selected war writers. The nurse's role arouses sexual jealousy in Guda's fiancé Percy: 'Der Gedanke ist mir furchtbar, daß Deine schönen Hände, die ich anbete, die Haut, das Fleisch irgendeines anderen Mannes berühren könnten!' (*DO*,292). By this stage of the novel his

opinion carries minimal weight, but his comments remind the reader of the removal of normal conventions in the physical proximity of the nurse and her patient. Jacques writes of his hospital treatment in ...*puis il mourut* at the hands of a pretty nun: 'comme ma blessure était mal placée, c'était parfois gênant' (*PIM*,136), but he has little choice except to accept her care with gratitude.

Jeanne Landre, always eager to add another erotic scene, creates the hospital bedside fantasy for Jacques in ...*puis il mourut*, with Raymonde as the private nurse to his submissive patient: 'Recevoir d'elle de tendres soins, sentir la main légère panser sa chair meurtrie, la laisser faire de lui ce qu'il lui plairait, puisqu'il était sa chose, son bien, puisqu'il s'était donné à elle!' (*PIM*,118). At her mercy, he has become the sexual object, taking on the traditional female role as the passive victim.

Raymonde takes up the theme in her response, thriving on the power-play at work: 'Rien n'est plus magnifique au coeur d'une femme que de survenir quand tout paraît détruit. Quelle frénésie, quelle volupté alors, à réparer, à rebâtir!' (*PIM*,145). There is an element of personal sexual gratification in her perception of the task which runs counter to the propaganda image of docile women pursuing their maternal duties.

Then, as if to increase the tensions between the received view of women and the products of the war climate, several of the writers create fictional nurses who undertake the maternal role with a strange perversion - the castratory figures of male nightmares. In *L'Oubliée*, when Adrienne helps to dress a departing soldier honoured with 'la croix de guerre,' she acts as if she were a mother preparing a little boy for a journey: 'elle lui avait mis son unique chaussette, lacé son brodequin, elle avait ajusté les bretelles sur les maigres épaules devenues inégales...'(*LO*,173). Yet, with another patient, she develops a morbid

fascination for one of the terrible wounds she dresses each day:

> cette plaie profonde entre ses bords marbrés qui avait été si longtemps au premier plan de sa vie quotidienne, qu'elle découvrait chaque matin avec inquiétude et dévotion, qu'elle avait fini par aimer. (*LO*,171)

At the hospital Adrienne Estier refers to the soldiers by numbers: 'Le pauvre 36' or 'le 28'. (*LO*,170-171) The men have lost their individuality, and are remembered for their deformities rather than their personalities, almost like freaks in a sideshow.

Lucie Delarue-Mardrus offers a similar approach in *Un Roman civil*, when a doctor accuses the Red Cross nurses of loving only the high drama of the profession: 'Elles sont bien dévouées, bien gentilles, mais il leur faut des grands blessés, il leur faut des opérations, il leur faut du pus, on ne sait plus comment les satisfaire!' (*RC*,201-202). The nurses appear hungry for blood, eager to take male victims into their care. This is the Kleinian mother figure who offers both succour and destruction at her breast.

These role-reversal images of impotent civilian men threatened by war-hungry women and helpless patients in the hands of powerful nurses counter expectations and reveal that women's fiction of the First World War offers 'a classic case of the dissonance between official, male-centred history and unofficial female history.'[22] The writers of both countries sabotage the patriarchal premise that war is the setting to pay homage to 'masculine/feminine' values, thereby questioning male power and thriving upon female autonomy.

With the power of hindsight it is possible to assess how the First World War destroyed the myth of heroic battle. As Gilbert and Gubar point out, the soldier of No Man's land had become just that - 'he was no man, an inhabitant of

the inhumane new era and a citizen of the unpromising new land into which this war of wars had led him.'[23]

Yet, even in the heart of the propaganda war, women writers had taken note of the themes of alienation and butchery which became central issues in the work of male opponents of the war. In the barracks or the trenches, away from the public displays of military might which impress the fictional female crowds, there is a shift in the power base. Sharon Macdonald points out that when a young man joins the army he finds that 'in the submission to authority required of him, he is taking on a typically "feminine" role'.[24] In entering the military hierarchy he must become obedient and submissive to a higher authority, no longer issuing but accepting orders. In her analysis of duty, Madeleine Pelletier explains that men give up their individuality to become part of the fighting force:

> Au sein du troupeau humain, la conscience de la valeur individuelle s'obscurcit. L'uniforme des armées remplit son office, il uniformise. Avec ses habits bleu-horizon, son sac, son fusil et sa baïonnette, le soldat s'identifie à son numéro.[25]

Noble warriors marching boldly into the fray are replaced by images of men transformed into ciphers.

While writers like Delarue-Mardrus re-work the masculinist hierarchy, creating weak male figures who struggle within the patriarchal framework, Helene von Mühlau and Clara Viebig, by contrast, call into question the societal values which dominate the wartime environment. Clara Viebig, in particular, exposes the empty exhortations of the warmongers: 'Aber, der allgemeine Taumel hatte ihn mitgerissen' (*TdH*,6) is a mother's lament at the departure of her son, rather than a cause of rejoicing. The scene in Remarque's *Im Westen nichts Neues* when Kantorek, the schoolteacher, urges the young men to join the

army with the words: 'Ihr geht doch mit, Kameraden?'[26] finds a parallel in the earlier *Töchter der Hekuba*. Hedwig Bertholdi remembers the schoolmaster goading her son Rudolf: 'Wie, Bertholdi, Sie sind noch immer hier? Sie sind doch groß und stark' (*TdH*,6).

It is a topic which Margarete Böhme also exploits in *Kriegsbriefe der Familie Wimmel*, when the youthful enthusiasm of Ludwig Legrand is expressed in an early letter:

> Er hätte es dicke, die Schulbank zu drücken, sagte er, die ganze Prima ginge mit und die halbe Sekunda, und überhaupt hänge ihm das ganze fade Leben zum Halse heraus, es sei eine wahre Wohltat, daß ein frischer, fröhlicher Krieg die Öde dieses oasenlosen Daseins unterbreche. (*KW*,13)

Böhme undermines the empty promises of this 'frischer, fröhlicher Krieg' by choosing to let Ludwig die in battle. A different ploy is chosen later in the text, when Heinrich's brave words: 'Um den Sieg zu erlangen, dürfen keine Opfer zu groß sein' (*KW*,139) are also answered by his death. Although Böhme's choice of victim is something of a compromise, as the sons of Susanna (the central mother figure) survive, this is a more honest response to war than that of Christaller, who avoids death, or of Boy-Ed, who infuses the sorrow with patriotic elegies.

Similarly, in *Der Kriegsfreiwillige*, Helene von Mühlau appears to question the values of the military system itself. Her motives for electing a central anti-hero are not to ridicule the character, but to strip away the bravura images of war which fired the imagination of the young volunteers. The novelist does not condemn Maria for her possessive actions, nor does she give Ernst a smooth passage into the hussars, undercutting the soldiers' initial patriotic

fervour when they are forced to shovel dung: 'sie kommen sich gedemütigt vor - diejenigen wenigstens, die von den hohen Schulen gekommen sind, um dem Vaterland zu dienen' (*K*,98).

While mother and son must ultimately bow to patriarchal standards, both men and women suffer visibly from the masculinist codes. In her critical presentation of military values, von Mühlau attacks the validity of an old soldier's conclusion: 'Der Kopf ist noch so klar und nur der Körper wird gebrechlich. Besser sind heute jene daran, bei denen der Körper blüht und die Gedanken nachlassen' (*K*,35). Through the character of Ernst, the novelist questions the values which rank brawn over brain.

Helene von Mühlau emulates Jeanne Landre by describing army life from the soldier's perspective. While Jacques in *...puis il mourut* is a seasoned campaigner, the young volunteer Ernst in *Der Kriegsfreiwillige* enters a new and harsh environment: 'Es ist so rauh und laut da draußen in der Kaserne. Man ist gar kein Mensch für sich - man ist eine Nummer' (*K*,125). This theme is repeated at a later stage from the maternal point of view. As Maria Hiller watches the soldiers swear their allegiance to the flag, she is struck by her inability to recognize her own son amongst the rows of military men: 'Sie sehen alle gleich aus, die glattgeschorenen Köpfe über den bunten Kragen [...] Sie sind nicht mehr Menschen für sich; sie gehören einer großen Einheit an, die keine Unterschiede duldet' (*K*,150). This loss of individuality is a major theme of male First World War literature but, observed here from the female perspective, it undermines the early bravado of the bellicose atmosphere. The heroes have been toppled from their plinths and turned into tin soldiers. The uniform, which evoked such admiration in the departure scenes, is now purely the symbol of uniformity.

Even in *La Veillée des armes*, Tinayre's patriotic novel of the mobilization, François's return to the army symbolizes the loss of his personal freedom: 'Son existence individuelle devenait tout à fait négligeable' (*VA*,278). Jeanne Landre takes up the same issue in ....*puis il mourut*, portraying the soldiers in the trenches who have lost control of the direction of their lives. As Jacques explains in a letter to Raymonde: 'Nous devions sortir demain des tranchées, mes les autorités estiment que nous n'y avons pas assez mariné, et nous y laissent' (*PIM*,82). Here the tone is resigned, but there is an added bitterness, born of the war's prolongation, which Tinayre's early enthusiasm avoids.

German writers convey similar messages of the shift in power. The reaction of the mature and sensitive Ottbert in *Die Opferschale* contrasts with the impulsive response of Katharina's headstrong brothers. In the midst of the patriotic fervour he expresses his loss of independence: 'Aber er gehörte nicht mehr sich selbst an. Seine Freiheit hatte er geopfert, um die Freiheit des Vaterlandes erkämpfen zu helfen' (*DO*,260). The same fate awaits Ernst Hiller and his friends, who volunteer for the army in *Der Kriegsfreiwillige* and are conscious of their change of status:

> Heute noch ging kein Mensch in der Welt sie was an; heute konnten sie ruhig hier in nächster Nähe des Obersten sitzen, ihre Mahlzeit verzehren und ihren Wein trinken, konnten lachen und sich unterhalten, wie es ihnen beliebte. In ein paar Tagen aber, wenn sie Glück hatten, wenn sie angenommen wurden, waren diese hier ihre Vorgesetzten... (*K*,64-65)

Abandoning the power which is commensurate with their male civilian status in a patriarchal society, they are now forced to adopt the traditionally female submissive role. Von Mühlau emphasizes the almost childish innocence of the young men in their first uniforms: 'Ein ganzer Teil sieht aus wie Jungen, die zu

Weihnachten eine Soldatenuniform erhalten haben' (*K*,75).

Working during 1914-18 and dependent for their understanding of the military conflict upon the censored truth, government propaganda and the individual tales of soldiers who had returned from the front, women writers of the period noticed this loss of identity and sexual dominance. Madeleine Pelletier states in her pamphlet *Avons-nous des devoirs?*: 'C'est avec juste raison qu'on a comparé un régiment marchant au canon à un troupeau de moutons que l'on mène à l'abattoir'.[27] Rachilde similarly sabotages the overall patriotic stance with her impressions of the troop trains carrying the soldiers to the front:

> Dans ma jumelle je distinguais les bouches ouvertes, les sourcils froncés par l'effort et j'avais le dessin de leurs cris: "Patrie! France! République! A Berlin!" Ces convois étaient ornés de verdures piquées de fleurs rouges, roses, blanches. Cela rappelait ces guirlandes bien régulières que les bouchers font à l'étal de leurs chairs primées. (*DP*,63)

Clara Viebig, joining with Rachilde in the constant undermining of the heroic images, employs similar animal imagery in *Töchter der Hekuba*, when she uses the narrative voice to describe the battle of Dixmuide:

> lauter junge Soldaten, die noch nicht wissen, was Krieg ist. Was eine Schlacht ist. Sie waren hineingelaufen wie Schafe, die ins Feuer rennen, ahnungslos, daß es sie verbrennt. (*TdH*,8)

Stripped of their heroic aura, the male figures leaving for war or charging onto the battlefield are transformed into animals to the slaughter, mindlessly following each other to their deaths, or arranged on the slab for the female customers to take their pick. Deprived of their noble initiative, the soldiers become the hapless victims at the mercy of the butcher.

These are the very themes which haunt the imagination of many male

writers of the war period. In *Le Feu* Barbusse has a soldier comment upon the civilian's failure to comprehend the reality of war: 'C'est tout à fait comme si une vache disait: "Ça doit étre beau à voir, à La Villette, ces multitudes de boeufs qu'on pousse en avant!"'[28] The work of Viebig and Rachilde reveals that the message had eventually made its way through to the home front, destroying the myth of glorious battle.

Male characters have been toppled from their pedestals to be slaughtered or mutilated in the trenches. The wounded return as weak children to be handed over to the now powerful figures of the waiting nurses. Those men who have not yet been touched by the war either know that their fate hangs in the balance, or are the non-combatant 'eunuchs' stripped of their manhood in the critical eyes of the female population of bellicose women. There has been a reversal in gender relations, as men are forced to prove their masculinity, while women enjoy their liberty free from male dominance.

Political motivation governs the level of textual opposition. Lucie Delarue-Mardrus consciously undermines a number of sexual stereotypes, thereby calling into question a range of received ideas about gender and patriotism; Helene Christaller, recognizing the transitions taking place in the wartime society of the day, relies upon sub-plots, secondary characters, and comments uttered privately behind the public façade to carry messages which counter traditional expectations; and Clara Viebig's war novels determinedly erode the patriotic mood, revealing war as a destroyer of hopes and moral values. By openly or tacitly acknowledging the underlying tensions which threaten to shake masculinist standards, the writers offer resistance to the image of the acquiescent female and her heroic consort. As the borders are re-mapped at the fighting front, so the lines are redrawn on the battlefield of sexual conflict, as

heroes become victims and power changes hands.

If this were the whole story, one would expect a permanent re-writing of the rules of gender relations to emerge from these texts. Yet, despite these fluctuations in the power equation, the overriding atmosphere of the novels is not triumphalism but anguish. There is a sense of stagnation rather than progression, which is not born simply of the patriarchal oppression of the preceding chapter.

The feeling of pain which permeates women's writing of 1914-18 transcends traditional gender conflict and brings together the adherents of the patriarchal system and the fledgling feminist writers to share a common discourse. In the final chapter this theme of female suffering will form the focus, as the novelists concentrate upon female perspectives of war which lie outside the parameters of canonical war literature.

NOTES

1 See Gayle Greene and Coppélia Kahn's opening chapter 'Feminist Scholarship and the social construction of woman' in *Making a Difference: Feminist Literary Criticism* (London and New York: Methuen, 1985), p.3.

2 *Ibid.*, p.9.

3 Annie Leclerc, *Parole de femme* (Paris: Editions Grasset, 1974), p.119.

4 Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Herland* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1979).

5 H. Cloquié, *La Femme après la Guerre* (Paris: Chez Maloine, 1915), p.14.

6 Margarete Henschke, *Der Krieg und die Frauen* (Berlin: Protestantischer Schriftenvertrieb, 1915), p.12.

7 *Ibid.*, p.14.

8 Maurice Barrès, *Ce que peuvent et doivent faire les femmes* (Paris: Bloud et Gay, 1918), p.4.

9 See 'Drawing the Lines - Gender, Peace and War: An Introduction' by Sharon MacDonald in *Images of Women in Peace and War* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Education Ltd., 1987), p.18.

10 Malita von Rundstedt, *Der Schützengraben des deutschen Mädchens* (Berlin-Dahlem: Verlag: Evang.Verband zur Pflege der weiblichen Jugend Deutschlands, 1916), p.4.

11 Eric Leed quoted in Sandra M.Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *No Man's Land. Volume 2, The Place of the Woman Writer in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989), p.290.

12 Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits I* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1966), pp.157-158.

13 Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *op.cit.*, p.280.

14 Margarete Henschke, *op.cit.*, p.14.

15 *Ibid.*, p.17.

16 See Toril Moi, *Sexual/Textual Politics* (London and New York: Methuen, 1985), p.134.

17 Malita von Rundstedt, *op.cit.*, p.4.

18 Margarete Henschke, *op.cit.*, p.16.

19 Helene Christaller, 'Die Deutsche' in *Stille Opfer* (Hagen i.W.: Verlag von Otto Rippel, 1915), p.69.

20 Marcelle Capy, *Une Voix de femme dans la mêlée* (Paris: Ollendorf, 1916), p.84.

21 Malita von Rundstedt, *op.cit.*, p.8.

22 Sandra M.Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *op.cit.*, p.262.

23 *Ibid.*, p.259.

24 Sharon Macdonald, *op.cit.*, p.16.

25 Madeleine Pelletier, *Avons-nous des devoirs*? (Caen: Le Semeur, s.d.), p.2.

26 Erich Maria Remarque, *Im Westen nichts Neues* (London: Methuen Educational Ltd, 1984), p.48.

27 Madeleine Pelletier, *op.cit.*, p.5.

28 Henri Barbusse, *Le Feu* (Paris: Flammarion, 1965), p.272.

CHAPTER FIVE

FEMALE VOICES

The two preceding chapters have dealt with images from the war scenario in which the battle of the sexes continues to be waged far away from the trenches: the soldier bidding farewell to his acquiescent spouse, the woman haranguing the civilian male, and the impotent victim in the hands of the Red Cross nurse. Although they witness the war from their lowly ranking in the patriarchal hierarchy, women writers have sketched the same images of heroic soldiers turned into ciphers and civilian women thriving on their new-found autonomy which also fired the imagination of their male counterparts. The themes are not unique to women's writing, but the perspective has changed.

It is when the lines of communication break down that the focus shifts from the field of gender conflict to concentrate upon the experiences which are unique to each sex. In the first pages of *Les Heures longues* Colette writes of the announcement of the outbreak of war and its effect on the holidaymakers on the beach at Saint-Malo:

> Des femmes quittent les groupes en courant, s'arrêtent comme frappées, puis courent de nouveau, avec un air d'avoir dépassé une limite invisible

et de s'élancer de l'autre côté de la vie. (*LHL*,7)

Even in these opening moments, women have formed a break-away group, striving to come to terms with the consequences of the news. Silent at this juncture, they will eventually find voices to express their sorrow.

The segregation caused by the mobilization led primarily to separate existences in parallel zones, creating a sense of mutual misunderstanding between the soldiers who went to the trenches and the women who remained in the supposedly peaceful world of the 'home front'. While women writers frequently avoid the issue of front-line fighting which lies outside their personal range of vision, men rarely portray women in relation to one another in their texts,[1] remaining in ignorance of the events which take place in the distant 'Herland' once the soldiers have taken their leave.

It is in this domain that women writers of 1914-1918 make their distinctive contribution to the literary heritage of the First World War. Transcending traditional binary oppositions and offering a fictional variation on the soldier's legacy, women look beyond the male names on the rolls of honour to the mothers, wives, daughters, sisters and lovers whose stake in the conflict exceeds the limitations of sexual power play. This third element, the *mater dolorosa* image of Foringer's picture in which the mother mourns the execution of her son, is the expression of suffering which forms part of women's war inheritance.

Epitomized in the death of sons, there is a layer of tragedy beneath the patriotic platitudes which the women writers of 1914-18 strive to illustrate. 'Jede, auch die opferbereiteste, heldenhafteste Mutter, muß sich innerlich dagegen auflehnen, daß sie für das Schlachtfeld gebären soll'[2] wrote Gertrud

Bäumer in 1916, displaying this typical confusion of emotions which threatens to swamp human misery by patriotic truism. Women writers who succeed in creating a 'female discourse' must transcend patriarchal dichotomies and the pro-war clichés which unashamedly manipulated suffering for the purposes of propaganda. Novelists who attempt to offer 'female responses' must separate the depiction of women's experiences of war from the empty rhetoric. This chapter will analyse this third element in women's war writing and the novelists' success in finding a voice within the limitations of a patriarchal, phallocentric vocabulary.

However, in analysing the selected war novels, I wish to bear in mind Mary Eagleton's warning that the words 'female responses' may imply that 'there is something intrinsic in the experience of being female... presuming an unproblematic unity among women across culture, class and history.'[3] It is a danger which is clearly illustrated by the wartime evocation of 'essentialism' in the name of the pacifist cause, when women were elevated by their supposedly natural tendencies to the status of 'l'ennemie irréductible de la guerre... la femme créatrice de vie, source éternelle de la race, étoile de l'avenir';[4] or, from a German perspective, 'das Weib, Urquell alles Lebens, bewertet die Mühen, Leben zu schaffen, ganz anders als der Mann'.[5] Writing in 1916 the French pacifist Marcelle Capy proclaimed 'une solidarité naturelle qui unit les femmes de toute la terre, et qui injurie les unes atteint les autres',[6] yet it is clear from the historical struggle undergone by pacifist women that there was no such universal reaction to the events of 1914-1918.

Nevertheless, whether they be patriots or pacifists, it is equally evident that the women of France and Germany were confined to the 'home front' by very similar cultural restrictions. Excluded from the political and military arenas,

French and German women shared an ordeal which was qualitatively different from the experience of the fighting soldier or the non-combatant/pacifist male. Forbidden to bear arms, women were assigned a singular status in time of war, particularly in the eyes of the pacifist cause:

> Il y a, en tout cas, une objection de poids qui était toujours faite à des hommes, celle-ci: vous êtes pacifiste parce que vous avez peur de vous battre. On ne pouvait prendre cette position à l'égard d'une femme.[7]

Although ideology rather than biology denied women the ordeal of the trenches, the result was a sexual ghettoisation with well-defined demarcations for the male and female experience of war. Women's individual reactions to the conflict may differ, but they offer responses which fall outside the parameters of traditional male fiction and have, therefore, failed to make an impact on the public consciousness. This chapter will show that there is no uniquely 'female' response to the events of the First World War, but that there are issues which lie outside the male range of vision and which women seek to express. These are voices which articulate the experiences of the disenfranchised, unarmed civilians, searching for images and metaphors which will describe their sorrow.

For the majority of the writers, the response to the horrors of war forms a thread which runs through the story, the extent of its exposure depending upon the patriotic or pacifist engagement of the writer. Opposition to the war is seen in its more extreme forms in the work of Claire Studer (1891-1977), who sought to transmit anti-war sentiments through the literary medium.[8] Her publication of short stories entitled *Die Frauen erwachen* (1918) relates the effect of war upon women whose lives are devastated by the death or mutilation of the men they love, often ending with despair or the suicide of the central character. Studer

concludes her collection with the tale *Verschüttet*, in which a young woman realizes that her lover's spirit has been crushed by his experience in the trenches. Going out into the street, she kills an army General before turning the gun upon herself:

> Mit dem süßen Gefühl irgendeiner Rache für ihr zerstörtes Leben, öffnete sie auch ihren Mund weit der Waffe. Das Entsetzen hatte einen freien Raum um sie geschaffen. Bevor man sie greifen konnte, schoß sie und fiel um.[9]

This final act reflects the bleak tone of Studer's work and the insistence of her anti-war message. Her work contrasts with the efforts of her contemporaries whose work forms the focus of this thesis. In the majority of cases, the conflict between a desire to halt the bloodshed and a sense of nationalist loyalty forms the focus of the selected fiction, which testifies to the powerful patriotic pressures which sought to stifle opposition to the war effort.

Despite the wartime divisions imposed upon the women of France and Germany and their status as enemies facing each other across a fortified border, the emotions expressed within the texts betray a considerable similarity. Writers who believe that women's primary wartime role is to 'stand and wait' find comparable metaphors to describe their suffering which cut across both languages. In the propagandist advice to women of *Der Krieg und die Frauen* Margarete Henschke declares: 'Das ist die große Forderung des Krieges auch an die Frauen, daß sie dem Vaterland ihr Liebstes opfern müssen, tapfer, gefaßt, ergeben, gehorsam der höchsten Pflicht'.[10] However, once the flag-waving scenes of the mobilization are over, the patriotic vocabulary becomes marginalized within the text. Henschke claims that a woman's mind is never at ease for her concerns are now: 'Wie steht's mit meinen Geliebten im

Felde?...wie steht's um das geliebte Vaterland?'[11] In the works of 1914-1918, the novelists firmly assert the order of priorities, in which the fate of the Fatherland takes secondary place to the individual welfare of the soldiers.

Gertrud Bäumer, who does not conceal her belief in the justness of Germany's cause, writes of 'die stumme Millionenfahrt der deutschen Herzen zu den Männern an der Front'[12] and the agony of the female role: 'Und wie kann es ausgesprochen werden, dies Herzklopfen des Wiedersehens und diese merkwürdige Reue der neuen Trennung, daß man nach so viel Sehnsucht und Sorge doch nicht genug einander gesagt und gezeigt und den kostbaren Schatz dieser Tage nicht heilig genug gehalten habe?'[13] After the sorrowful partings, the men go to the battlefields, but the women are left to people a land which has lost any semblance of a female utopia and is described by several writers in direct parallel to the soldiers' experience at the front. After two years of war Malita von Rundstedt compares the woman's situation to that of the immobilised soldier in the trenches. In her pamphlet entitled *Der Schützengraben des deutschen Mädchens* she claims that it is easier for both to be in the heat of battle 'als im Schützengraben, im langen Stellungskrieg durchzuhalten, geduldig und unentwegt'.[14] It is a theme which is treated by Clara Viebig in *Töchter der Hekuba* when a poor, hungry woman asks the aristocrat Frau von Voigt:

> Was glauben Sie wohl, meine Dame, was schwerer is? Im Schützengraben liegen oder hier so drinne sitzen, daß man überhaupt kein Ende von absieht? So einer weiß doch: Nu kommt gleich 'ne Granate, und denn bin ich weg, weiß selber nich wie. Aber wir - ? (*TdH*,218)

Women's writing of the period inherently echoes feelings of impotence, uncertainty and waiting - this is a form of trench life without the warfare and the adrenaline of battle. The climax is not the direct hit of a bullet, but the arrival of

a telegram.

Viebig evokes most eloquently this private battleground far out of the range of death on which the immobilized protagonists wait to learn their fate. Beginning with Hedwig Bertholdi, the plot expands to encompass female characters linked only by the bond of loving a soldier at the front. As we have already seen, the one woman without that sense of belonging, Margarete Dietrich, loses her sanity, while the two wives who break their marriage vows, Minka Dombrowski and Frau Siebenrat, are removed from the plot by death, as if in punishment for their treason. The women who remain form an army whose sole criterion for entry is the common burden of fear for the well-being of the men they love:

> Da saßen sie nun alle - wohin sie blickte: Frauen, Frauen - ach Gott, sie hatte gar nicht gewußt, daß es so viele Frauen gab - und dachten nichts anderes, sprachen nichts anderes als: Krieg, Krieg. Und mußten doch den Tag hinleben im Kleinkram ihres Daseins und sich heimlich verzehren bei Tag und bei Nacht in der Sorge um die draußen. (*TdH*,38)

It is a motif which is encapsulated in all the plots. The chivalric vocabulary is reserved, however unjustifiably, for descriptions of the soldier's duty, while the woman is left with the 'Kleinkram ihres Daseins'. All the novelists encompass the tragic female wartime role that leaves women in safety but asks them to sacrifice the men they love. As Simone claims in the early patriotic atmosphere of the war in *La Veillée des armes*: 'Se sacrifier! Ah! que ce serait facile et peu méritoire! Chacune de nous accepterait de mourir pour le pays... Mais sacrifier ce qu'on aime!...'(*VA*,200). For the men who lay down their lives, death puts an end to physical and mental torment, permitting the entry of the eulogizers to glorify the hero's death; but, for the women, the anguish continues beyond their

loved one's grave and into an uncertain future. As Simone explains to François and his military friends:

> Il faut plaindre un peu celles qui restent. Dans la guerre, vous ne voyez que l'action, le danger magnifique et aussi un exercice professionnel. J'admire votre élégant courage, mais je ne peux parler de la guerre, comme vous le faites, avec sérénité. Les douleurs inouïes que je prévois me font mal, par avance, et je me sens meurtrie avec tous les blessés et avec toutes les femmes qui souffriront dans leur coeur. (*VA*,199-200)

The women who 'souffriront dans leur coeur' make a private sacrifice - not a flagrant form of courage which has a natural claim to public recognition. Writing in the same year, Helene von Mühlau repeats this same message from the mother's perspective in *Der Kriegsfreiwillige*:

> Wer bringt dem Vaterland das größere Opfer: der junge, begeisterte Soldat, der, von tausend Hoffnungen beseelt, hinauszieht - oder die, die ihn geboren hat, und die in diesen Augenblicken, da ihr Kind von einer anderen, größeren Macht gefordert wird, alle Wonnen, alle Schmerzen, das ganze Leben dieses Kindes von jener Zeit an, da sie es noch unter dem Herzen trug, wieder durchkosten muß. (*K*,155)

Even the most patriotic of the writers, who easily adopt the language of the propagandists to convey military 'glory', struggle to glamorize women's role as the passive victims. Visions of heroic agony are used to accompany the inauspicious personal misery in *Die unsere Hoffnung sind*, but because Helene Christaller does not allow death to touch the central protagonists it retains a mythical status:

> Die Trauernden aber tragen die silberne Opferschale in den Händen und sind die Priesterinnen, vor denen die Freude sich beugt, und denen das Glück in heißem Dank den Saum ihres Kleides küßt, denn sie litten für uns, und ihre Häupter sind schwer vom Segen der Verschonten. (*UH*,216)

A very similar propagandist image is employed by Ida Boy-Ed in *Die Opferschale* when Katharina has a vision of women's suffering:

> Sie sah eine Frauengestalt, von dunklen Flören war sie umflossen und kaum erkennbar von den düsterroten Schatten des Hintergrundes. Ihre ganze Erscheinung verschwamm fast mit ihm in eins. Nur ihre Hände waren deutlich - weiße, vorausgestreckte schmale Hände - sie trugen eine Schale, aus ihr stieg eine Rauchsäule in steiler Linie empor, der Dampf heißer Tränen, die die Schale füllten. (*DO*,143)

The 'Opferschale' of the title becomes the narrator's leitmotif: 'Nicht Tränen - Arbeit, hieß das Opfer, das man ihrem ernsten Gedenken zur Weihe in die Schale legen mußte, die das verhüllte Schicksal den Frauen vorantrug. Ohne Zögern nahm die junge Frau die ihre auf' (*DO*,233); and when Guda rejects Percy's love: 'Ihre glühende Leidenschaft, die in ihrem Blute gebrannt - sie hatte sie in die Opferschale gelegt, die das Schicksal den Frauen hinhielt' (*DO*,293).

In *Die Opferschale* the death in battle of the confirmed scoundrel Berthold obviously serves as poetic justice for his beleaguered wife, but Boy-Ed's constant manoeuvring of the character Katharina creates a vessel for propaganda rather than a convincing heroine. In the remaining novels the possibility - or realization - of the soldier's death is the dominant theme and he is lamented, irrespective of his moral quality.

Although often physically absent from the plots, the male characters retain a constant presence. In *...puis il mourut* Raymonde's comfortable existence is disturbed by her thoughts of Jacques and she trembles 'sans cesse à l'idée du danger qui le guettait' (*PIM*,35). Camille Mayran provides two contrasting characters in *L'Oubliée*, with the independent, competent nurse Adrienne Estier consoling weak, defenceless Denise Huleau. Yet both women rely on the same fantasy existence to bear the separation from the men they love. Adrienne seeks

comfort in the imagined presence of her husband: 'L'absent était là; elle s'appuyait à son épaule... Elle goûta une seconde d'illusion, fraîche et surprenante comme à l'assoiffé qui se penche sur un puits l'odeur de l'eau' (*LO*,176); and Denise, relating her own tale later in the story, reveals the same reliance on daydreams of her absent lover:

> Alors je pris l'habitude de penser à Philippe comme s'il était là, dans la chambre voisine, et plus tard comme s'il était plus près encore, tout à côté de moi. Je le situais dans la pièce, je savais de quel côté il aurait fallu tourner la tête pour le voir, ou tendre la main pour le toucher. (*LO*,214)

The reader will later learn the poignancy of such scenes, when Denise's dreams are shattered by her fiancé's betrayal. Mayran contrasts the martyrist mission of Gotton Connixloo with Denise's private world of quiet, unheroic suffering in a darkened house under the German occupation.

It is in this depiction of fear and longing that the writers give the most significant expression to the female voices of war. As we have seen, Marcelle Tinayre essentially runs away from the issue of death, the format of *La Veillée des armes* ensuring that Simone is not tested with 'la suprême épreuve du deuil' (*VA*,222). However, although Simone accepts the inevitability of François's departure, her transition to resigned patriot does not reach its apex in the archetypal heroic farewell. 'Encore une fois, elle tordit ses mains et laissa couler les larmes qui l'aveuglaient' (*VA*,222) is Simone's response to the thought of François's death; and Tinayre cuts out the traditional train station scene, with the cheering soldiers and waving handkerchiefs. At the end of the novel Simone tears herself away from her husband's arms:

> Et elle s'arracha de lui, brutalement. Elle courut, sans se retourner, vers la sortie, mordant son mouchoir, l'âme et les yeux pleins de ténèbres et

> sentant fuir sa vie comme si on lui avait coupé les veines... (*VA*,290)

The novelist's reliance on melodrama switches the focus from the heroic mission to the suffering heroine and, although the final word of the novel may be 'Victoires', this compromise does not meet all the requirements of a patriotic conclusion.

Similarly, Helene von Mühlau refuses to incorporate traditional propaganda images: 'An einen Bahnhof muß man gehen, um Leid und Schmerz in ihrer wahren, herzzerreißenden Gestalt zu sehen' (*K*,40) is the claim of the narrator in *Der Kriegsfreiwillige*. As if a premonition of her own fate, Maria watches 'wie ein kräftiger Mann eine ganz haltlos gewordene Frau von sich schob und fortraste. Nun stand dies arme Geschöpf mit starren Augen, aus denen Entsetzen sprach, da - totenbleich, dem Umfallen nahe' (*K*,40).

Throughout the text of *Dans le puits* the narrator also chips away at the traditional patriotic veneer:

> Je n'ai pas entendu le tocsin, ni la Marseillaise, je n'ai assisté à aucune des manifestations grandioses du début [...] Moi aussi, j'ai crié, parce que j'ai peur tout de suite et j'ai pris le parti, plus courageux que vous ne le pensez, d'avoir peur pour tout le monde puisque tout le monde était brave. (*DP*,56)

Refusing to conform to heroic stereotypes, Rachilde is never afraid to shock firstly by raising, then confounding, the expectations of her reader. The departure of a soldier for the front creates the archetypal uplifting scene for his sorrowful but stoical wife:

> La petite pleurait, se mouchait et étirait la dentelle de son miniscule mouchoir moderne en formulant des réflexions à l'antique: "Il n'arrive que ce qui doit arriver. J'ai confiance... Je le donne pour qu'il revienne vainqueur! Il reviendra." (*DP*,70)

Then the narrator immediately offsets the patriotism with the abrupt conclusion:

> Il est revenu vainqueur, puisqu'il n'y a laissé que son bras droit, et la France est à present pareille à l'idole hindoue, formidablement hérissée de tous les bras arrachés à ses fils. (*DP*,70-71)

The depiction of France as an idol nurtured by its mutilated children jars with the patriotic premise and overturns the traditional evocation of the homeland as a loving mother figure. Rachilde's imagery runs counter to the stock metaphors furnished by the patriarchal vocabulary of war.

Margarete Böhme achieves a similar result in *Kriegsbriefe der Familie Wimmel*, as she offers a range of perspectives on war through the character of Susanna. 'Eine deutsche Mutter wird ihre wehrhaften Söhne nicht hinter ihrer Schürze zu verstecken suchen, denn sie ist stolz darauf, wenn ihre Söhne ihre Pflicht mit Begeisterung und Hingabe erfüllen' (*KW*,105) is Susanna's confident claim to a group of ladies at a *Kriegstee* - a comment which is immediately offset by her own concession:

> Mütter und Gattinnen, die ihre Söhne und Männer lieben, und sich daneben freuen, sie im Feuer zu wissen, gibt es meiner Meinung nach so wenig in Deutschland, als in Frankreich, Rußland, Japan oder England, noch überhaupt auf der Welt. (*KW*,105-106)

With one of her regular touches of irony, Böhme succeeds in raising the pacifist argument, while leaving her heroine within the patriarchal boundaries which she herself has constructed: 'In Kriegszeiten sollen wir Frauen uns auf die stille Liebestätigkeit beschränken, aber uns um Himmels willen von Politik fernhalten, denn wir Frauen sind die geborenen Trägerinnen des Friedengedankens', claims Susanna (*KW*,106). Böhme never steps over the border into pacifist territory, but

uses juxtaposition and paradox to undermine the uncompromising propaganda.

Helene Christaller, despite her traditionalist approach, interrupts the optimistic mood of Alf's mobilization in *Die unsere Hoffnung sind* with Gabriele's fears for her friend's fate: 'Immer sah sie den schönen schlanken Jungen, mit dem sie so viele Kindheitserinnerungen verbanden, blutig, verwundet, tot, und sie hätte aufschreien mögen' (*UH*,71). The outer trappings of jubilation are undercut by the girl's silent premonitions, revealing the inner forebodings which the patriotic novelist will not allow to be publicly expressed.

When death itself enters the plot of *Der Kriegsfreiwillige* Helene von Mühlau continues to undermine the patriotic stereotypes. When Maria learns of her lover's death there are no patriotic eulogies to alleviate her pain: 'Ganz klein, ganz gebrochen, ganz elend sitzt sie da und starrt vor sich hin' (*K*,275). Maria's suffering contrasts with the patriotic ideal:

> Sie hat das Gefühl, eine furchtbare Ungerechtigkeit erfahren zu haben; hat das Gefühl, gegen das Schicksal, das ihr immer - so lange sie denken kann - feindlich gesonnen war, anwüten zu müssen. Die große Zeit hat sie noch nicht groß und hart genug gemacht! (*K*,276)

Ida Boy-Ed's heroine Katharina rises to the occasion as a 'Heldenfrau' in *Die Opferschale*, matching the patriotic figures of war propaganda who meet disaster with nationalist pride. Yet other writers choose not to subscribe to these heroic role models. In one of the *Kriegsbriefe der Familie Wimmel* Sophie writes to her husband in the army:

> Man liest und hört in diesen Tagen viel von der antiken Seelengröße deutscher Frauen, die ohne Wimperzucken dem Vaterland die schwersten persönlichen Opfer darbringen. Ich bewundere solche Seelenkraft, aber ich selber konnte mich nicht auf die hohe Warte dieser sich selbst entäußernden Hingabe an die Allgemeinheit aufschwingen. (*KW*,40)

Helene von Mühlau makes a similar point in *Der Kriegsfreiwillige* when Maria finds no comfort in the heroic images:

> In den Zeitungen liest man oft von den Heldenfrauen und Heldenmüttern, die sich nicht beugen lassen - denen das Vaterland so hoch steht, daß sie das eigene Ich darüber vergessen; ja, die sich glücklich preisen, daß sie schmerzhafte Opfer bringen dürfen! Wo mögen sie die Kraft herhaben? Wer mag ihnen diese Stärke verleihen? (*K*,276)

Raising this issue at the moment of her heroine's suffering, the novelist mocks the very propagandist clichés which form the heart of Boy-Ed's novel.

In fact, Boy-Ed succeeds in maintaining this patriotic façade throughout *Die Opferschale* by the expedient measure of choosing a heroine whose child is well below the age of military service. In her role as the maligned wife Katharina has found her *raison d'être* in her son, claiming: 'ich glaube, die Mutter ist doch wohl stärker in mir als die Frau. Ohne Mann kann ich mich behelfen. Ohne Kind?'(*DO*,39). While her husband's death barely interrupts her existence, the sacrifice of her son remains hypothetical, leaving scope for the novel's final propagandist tribute.

In electing a central protagonist whose maternal love is not challenged by patriotic duty, Boy-Ed is following a closer line to the French novelists rather than her German counterparts. When one considers the historical perspective and the differing reactions to the falling birth rate, it is notable that the French writers have created central female characters who have no official maternal stake in the war game, so that the theme of motherhood plays its particular part in less conventional representations of the maternal role, or through the voices of secondary characters. The mother/child relationship finds its unorthodox expression in *Un Roman civil*, for example, when Elisabeth adopts the maternal

stance in response to Francis' antagonistic behaviour as the spoilt boy, allowing the war to nurture this potentially incestuous bond with the 'réformé' who is to become her (step)son.

Tinayre's protagonist Simone also has no personal experience of the joys and sorrow of motherhood: 'Chambre d'amants, trop petite pour qu'on y pût mettre un berceau' (*VA*,266) is one of the settings for *La Veillée des armes*, hinting that straitened circumstances have been an obstacle to parenthood and, as in the case of the eponymous heroine of Mayran's *Histoire de Gotton Connixloo*, excluding Simone from the mothers who must sacrifice their children for the nation. In fact, Gotton's suffering stems from her apparently barren state, so that she is treated by Luc 'comme une maîtresse que l'on flatte, que l'on gâte, pas comme une vraie femme avec qui l'on se réjouit des économies' (*GC*,113). Her inability to conceive fills Gotton with self-loathing and, in her own eyes, leaves her unprotected from the contempt of the community:

> Un petit enfant couché entre ses bras, un petit visage chaud et tendre collé à sa blanche mamelle veinée, voilà la vision dont elle se berce, la fille méprisée, en traversant le village où pas une figure ne lui sourit. (*GC*,83)

When war comes, Gotton feels no desire to flee from the invading German army: 'il lui semblait qu'elle aurait honte de s'en aller toute seule avec son amant parmi ces foules de gens qui fuyaient pour mettre à l'abri leurs petits enfants. "Qu'avons-nous donc à sauver?" pensait-elle' (*GC*,110).

Throughout the *Histoire de Gotton Connixloo*, Mayran relies repeatedly upon stereotypical assumptions about the woman's role, with the sinner/saint dichotomy and the stress upon the maternal function. In Mayran's second story of *L'Oubliée* Denise is assured by her friend Adrienne that she will find love

again - 'le vrai amour, celui de la fiancée pour le fiancé' (*LO*,273) - but the abandoned, lonely woman attempts to find a new purpose by adopting an orphaned child, a form of surrogate motherhood to compensate for the emptiness.

The surrogacy motif is also found in *Töchter der Hekuba* when Frau Krüger, having lost one son in the war, strives to resurrect the bond with Gertrud's baby: 'Gustav sein Kind - meinem Gustav sein Kind!' (*TdH*,262). In a rash attempt at reconciliation, she offers to buy the baby's milk, as if by providing the life-giving food she could take on surrogate motherhood. When her offer is rejected, her mind becomes unstable and she eventually steals the child away in an attempt to replace Gertrud in the maternal role: 'Sie sollen's nie bereuen, wenn Sie mir den Jungen hergeben. Sie werden ja sehen, wie er's hat - Sie kommen, alle Tage, Sie werden zufrieden sein. Und wenn ich sterbe: alles, alles für ihn' (TdH,263).

Therefore, within women's experience of war there is a self-imposed hierarchy of suffering which the writers create outside traditional class boundaries - the divisive criterion of the relationship of the woman to the soldier at the front. Novelists of both nations put forward the theory that the death of a son outweighs the death of a husband - a husband signifying the end of happiness already experienced, but a son a symbol of promise for the future. A widow may make a second marriage - a frequent theme in the texts - but the mourning for child carried in the womb receives different treatment within the texts.

The hierarchy in gender relationships is addressed by Clara Viebig in *Das rote Meer* when Hedwig gives priority to the mother over the widow, and Herr Bertholdi, as the husband, must come to terms with his secondary status:

> Zu anderen Zeiten hätte es Bertholdi vielleicht verletzt, daß seine Frau den Verlust des Mannes scheinbar weniger einschätzte als den des Sohnes;

> jetzt verstand er richtig: man leidet unter einer begrabenen Hoffnung - und was ist ein Sohn anders als eine Hoffnung? - schwerer als unter dem Verlust gewesenen Glücks. (*DrM*,59-60)

While the demise of husbands or lovers often receives surprisingly cursory treatment, the writers devote much more textual space to an analysis of the import of the death of sons. Rachilde, who has no son of her own, foresees the loss of the male as a diminution of the future, ruining the heritage which women have bequeathed:

> c'est qu'ils nous diminuent en s'en allant de nous, ils nous volent notre égoïste droit à nous survivre en eux. Comme je n'ai pas de fils, j'ai perdu mon fils dans tous les jeunes hommes qui sont morts, et chaque fois qu'on m'a tué quelqu'un que j'avais rêvé grand, on m'a dérobé une gloire. (*DP*,259)

The theme receives coverage in *La Veillée des armes*, where Madame Anselme, Madame Miton and Marie Pourat impart the maternal perspective which the childless Simone cannot provide. For Madame Anselme, her only child Pierre holds her own hopes for the future:

> Veuve et pauvre, Madame Anselme a pratiqué la plus farouche économie afin de procurer à son enfant la belle éducation qu'elle aurait tant souhaitée pour elle-même, et, née du peuple, elle a voulu atteindre à la bourgeoisie par son fils. (*VA*,14)

Having dedicated her life to her son, she is now asked to hand him over to the army - a fact which Madame Miton acknowledges in her description of the mother's suffering:

> quand on a mis un enfant au monde et qu'on l'a nourri et qu'on l'a élevé en travaillant jusqu'à ce qu'il soit un homme, et qu'on vous dit: "Maintenant, donnez-le pour qu'il soit peut-être tué, et vous resterez toute seule dans votre vieillesse, vous n'aurez plus rien..." (*VA*,142)

The same note is struck by Camille Mayran in *L'Oubliée* where Madame Huleau's pride in her sons' education gives the boys higher standing in her estimation than her daughter Denise:

> Lorsqu'elle retrouva quelque joie, ce fut par ses fils qui lui ressemblaient et dont les études exceptionnellement brillantes lui apportèrent cet élément de fierté qu'une femme de son espèce regarde instinctivement comme son dû. (*LO*,187)

Across the border the same theme is repeated in *Der Kriegsfreiwillige*, where the grandmother's ambitions for the future are carried out by the male dynasty:

> Der Sohn, der so früh und traurig dahinsiechte, hat ihre stolzen Träume nicht befriedigt; nun erhofft sie vom Kind ihres Kindes etwas Großes, hofft, daß der Name starken, neuen, schönen Klang durch ihn bekommt. (*K*,249)

The death of a son symbolizes the end of hope, security for the future and insurance against poverty. It is for this reason that Clara Viebig's employment of the peripheral figure of the Councillor's wife in *Töchter der Hekuba* carries such weight in her anti-war message. Having gone hungry to give her sons an education, the mother lives to witness all three young men destroyed in the same war. Viebig uses this poignant, inconsolable figure to frame the appeal for peace which ends the novel:

> "Frieden", stammelte die Arme nach. Es waren nur die Laute, der Sinn noch nicht erfaßt. Dann aber, als sei ihr plötzlich mit diesem *einen* Wort die Besinnung zurückgekehrt, belebte sich ihr starrer Blick. Sie fragte: "Frieden?" Und dann stürzten ihr plötzlich die Tränen aus den Augen: "Meine Söhne! Oh, meine Söhne!" (*TdH*,272).

Through the figure of the suffering mother, Viebig questions the validity of the

sacrifices which have been made.

Therefore, the desire to debunk the truisms and reveal the experience of women which lies behind the patriotic stereotypes finds its most eloquent expression in the mother/son bond, with premonitions of death or the reality of bereavement providing the most poignant moments in the texts. Although often failing to divest themselves of hackneyed metaphors, the writers portray an ordeal which offsets the jingoism of the official propaganda.

In *la Veillée des armes* the secondary character Madame Miton takes on a significant role as a spokesperson for mothers, arguing for a bond which crosses national barriers to unite women in nature and in misery:

> Je ne peux pas croire qu'une mère allemande ait le coeur autrement fait que moi! Il n'y a pas deux façons de mettre un enfant au monde, et pas deux façons de l'allaiter, et pas deux façons de l'aimer et de souffrir quand on le perd. La nature est partout la nature... (*VA*,143)

Simone is to reinforce this opinion later as she silently considers 'toutes les mères, de toutes les nations, qui ont enfanté dans la douleur, allaité dans la fatigue, nourri, soigné, élevé pendant vingt ans les beaux jeunes hommes promis à la mort' (*VA*,203-4). The repetition of Madame Miton's vocabulary and the image of grieving mothers lend emphasis to the earlier statement, while the support of the sympathetic heroine adds further weight. The maternal figures of Madame Miton and Madame Anselme, peripheral characters from the neighbourhood, add an extra dimension to the plight of the childless heroine Simone.

Writing in the same year, the German writer Helene von Mühlau attempts to raise this theme of maternal bonds in *Der Kriegsfreiwillige*. As the central female protagonist, Maria Hiller, watches her son make his oath to the Fatherland

in church, an unknown woman sitting beside her squeezes her hand, evoking the observation:

> Alle Mütter in der ganzen Welt, die ihre Söhne dahingeben - müssen sich verbunden fühlen in dieser Zeit - - - die höchste und die niederste müssen sich lieben, denn was ist Rang und Geld und Würde neben diesem bitterheißen, gewaltigen, heiligen Schmerz, den sie alle, alle durchkosten müssen? (*K*,156)

Here the breaking down of class barriers adds a further aspect to the biological argument, but the suffering of women is common to both theories. On both sides of the border, in the works of 1915, the same message is heard from the lips of the maternal figures - that this war should bring a sense of unity to mothers called upon to make the same sacrifice of their children.

Paul Fussell has identified the subject of religious sacrifice found in Great War poetry 'in which each soldier becomes a type of the crucified Christ'.[15] Ida Boy-Ed takes up this theme in *Die Opferschale* with her description of the soldier Otto: 'Mütter schmieden aus den Sternen am Himmel Kronen für ihre Söhne. Aber auf deren Stirnen verwandeln sie sich furchtbar und scheinen aus Dornen geflochten' (*DO*,389). In *Das rote Meer* Viebig makes the religious symbolism explicit, as the soldier Gustav Krüger takes on the role of Christ in the eyes of the mother who eventually accepts his death:

> War ihr Gustav denn nicht auch ein Gekreuzigter? Nichts verbrochen, wie ein Lamm zur Schlachtbank geführet, für anderer Sünden sein Blut vergossen, unschuldig ans Kreuz des Todes geschlagen. (*DrM*,71)

Jeanne Landre also interweaves a religious thread in *...puis il mourut* when, before the battle, Jacques amuses his comrades by producing his own 'croix de bois':

> Il avait fait confectionner cette croix par un sapeur habile, elle était en deux pièces démontables, et juste de la dimension de son sac, car il était décidé à aller au feu en l'emportant. Rien n'avait été oublié. Sur le bois noir, les lettres blanches: *Ici repose Jacques..., tué à l'ennemi le...* attendaient le complément précis de l'épitaphe. (*PIM*,211-212)

The title of the book has already removed any uncertainty about the ultimate outcome and the depiction of Jacques carrying his own cross to his death underlines the symbolism of the Christ-figure fulfilling his mission.

Lest there be any doubt, Landre reinforces the New Testament imagery on the final page when Raymonde hears the news of Jacques's demise: 'Accablée, écroulée, elle continuerait son calvaire, et sa crucifixion serait lente. Elle se sentait élue pour la plus grande douleur' (*PIM*,246). Raymonde has played the role of passive 'witness' at Jacques's crucifixion, but now she is to suffer her own slow execution, crushed by her burden of sorrow. Both the soldier and the woman who loved him are victims of the war, with the references to Calvary reinforcing the religious significance of their sacrifice.

The lovers have enjoyed a spate of role-playing in their sexual teasing, developing a mother/son bond which offers an additional layer to the text. Jacques is searching for someone to 'bercer le grand garçon qu'il était' (PIM,6) and, in the words of the narrator, 'l'amie maternelle et amoureuse que chaque homme espère' (*PIM*,13). Raymonde quickly assumes the chosen role: 'Je suis votre grande amie, c'est certain, mais il me semble être aussi votre petite mère' (*PIM*,15), announcing herself as 'virginale et savante' (*PIM*,175) with the echoes of virgin motherhood contrasting with her sexual status in the relationship.

Therefore, Jeanne Landre, together with several of her contemporaries, takes the male images of the Christ-like soldier a logical step further by making the analogy between the mother's role and that of the Virgin Mary, who watches

her son's mutilation and death. Frau Krüger, the mother who finally accepts the reality of her son's death in *Das rote Meer*, envisages Gustav as the crucified Saviour and, therefore, plays her natural part in the scene as she searches for his tomb: 'Wenn sie nun wie Maria, die Mutter, mit Maria Magdalena zum Grabe ging, ob sie ihn fanden?... eine Mutter will doch wissen, wo ihr Gekreuzigter liegt' (*DrM*,70-71). In *La Veillée des armes* Madame Miton takes on significance in Simone's eyes as 'la Mère Douloureuse' (*VA*,143) - a popular image for many of the writers which evokes the concept of the *Mater dolorosa*, described by Julia Kristeva as the woman who 'ne connaît de corps masculin que celui de son fils mort, et son seul pathos... est celui des larmes sur un cadavre'.[16]

The cult of the *mater dolorosa* presents the image of the Virgin Mary who 'was martyred, not in the body but in the spirit', and 'the sword Simeon prophesied would pierce her soul drew forth spiritual graces for mankind'.[17] Even in the patriotic *Die Opferschale*, in which wives accept the death of their husbands and lovers for the Cause, Ida Boy-Ed does not surrender the agony of the mother figure to a patriotic eulogy. Firstly, Katharina reflects upon the sacrifices made by Ottbert's mother: 'Und sie sann über den Madonnenkult der Katholiken und über die sieben Schwerter im Herzen der jungfräulichen *mater dolorosa*...' (*DO*,87). Although the death of Katharina's husband is swept aside, the demise of her heroic brothers is a tragedy for the mother which interrupts her confidence in the justness of the war: 'Sie selbst lebte doch! Wie konnte es denn sein, daß Blut von ihrem Blut entsprossen, daß von ihr Geborene, ein Teil ihres eigensten Daseins, tot sein sollten' (*DO*,316).

This depiction of the suffering mother, fearful for her son's fate or despairing at his death, plays a key role in the selected German texts and is central to *Der Kriegsfreiwillige*. The traditional image of the sword piercing the

heart of the Madonna is multiplied by Helene von Mühlau's depiction of Maria's pain: 'aber es tut alles so entsetzlich weh - so als ob einem scharfe Messer im Herzen wühlten' (*K*,13-14). As she watches Ernst swear his oath to the Fatherland, Maria's gaze is drawn to the images of the crucified Christ: 'Warum ist er gestorben? Warum hat er geduldet? Warum hat er eine Welt erlöst, die doch immer wieder in Zwietracht und Finsternis versinken muß?' (*K*,149).

Helene von Mühlau avoids the reality of maternal bereavement by ending the novel with Ernst's departure for the front line, but the fear of death is present, even amidst the fanfaronade of the military ritual in which the soldiers make their patriotic oaths:

> Hat sie dafür ihr Kind geboren, daß es, kaum ins Leben eingetreten, sich schon opfern soll. Hat sie ihr Kind geboren, damit es in einem Kriege, der tückischer, bestialischer geführt wird als je ein Krieg aus der Vorzeit, nicht einmal von offener Kugel getroffen, sondern vielleicht hingeschlachtet werden soll? (*K*,152-153)

Helene von Mühlau cuts across the ceremony with her vision of men butchered upon the battlefield, deflating the pomp with her abhorrence of war.

The plot of *Der Kriegsfreiwillige* is based upon the severing of the symbiotic bond between mother and child as the son takes his first, belated independent steps when he joins the army. This motif finds its echo throughout women's writing of the period, first with the act of parting and ultimately with the knowledge of death. It is the 'cri de la maternité déchirée' (*VA*,143) which Madame Miton expresses in *La Veillée des armes* as the union between mother and son is ruptured: 'Ça vous retourne le sang, madame, ça vous fait pire que de mourir vous-même' (*VA*,142-143). Tinayre writes of 'l'inutile sanglot des mères qui, depuis Hécube et Rachel, retentit éternellement d'âge en âge' (*VA*,144) - the

use of 'inutile' evoking the sense of impotence in the midst of their pain. This is the very image which Clara Viebig appropriates for her war novel which bears the reference to Hecuba in the title:

> Da waren sie, ein ungezählter Chor klagender, trauernder, geschlagener Mütter. Sie rauften die Haare, sie schlugen die Brüste, ihr Wehgeheul stieg auf zum Himmel, gleich stark, gleich furchtbar wie zu Zeiten der Hekuba. (*TdH*,120)

The war legends are rivalled by the myths of female suffering. Yet in both Tinayre's novel of 1915 and Viebig's work of 1917 on the opposite side of the border, there is a similar sense of paralysis. It is a theme summed up by Helene Christaller in *Die unsere Hoffnung sind* when she writes of the pain of Frau Eberhard's instinctive bond with her son when she is unable to come to his aid:

> Sie fühlte, daß ihr Sohn Schweres erlitt. Fühlte es an den kargen Karten und Briefen, fühlte es durch den Instinkt ihrer Mutterseele, die weiß, wann ein Kind leidet. Aber sie war machtlos. (*UH*,106)

Therefore women's constant battle within the novels is between the propagandist desire to help the Cause and the maternal instinct to preserve their children. Helene von Mühlau intersperses Maria's suffering with the patriotic voice of the grandmother, who reiterates the boundaries of women's mission: 'Du darfst nicht egoistisch sein. Eine Mutter hat die Pflicht, ihr Kind unter Schmerzen und Wonne zu gebären, es großzuziehen und dann wieder herzugeben. So will es die Natur und alles Auflehnen hilft nichts!' (*K*,14). Thea von Harbou utters a similar message in *Die deutsche Frau im Weltkrieg*:

> Die Tragödie der Mutter, wie sie das Leben täglich entwirft und dichtet, beginnt schon mit dem Augenblick, da sie das Kind, aus ihren Armen auf die Erde stellt und es zum ersten Male allein stehen läßt. Die winzige

> Kraft, die sich erprobt und betätigt hat, nimmt unbewußt, so wie sie wächst, der Mutter Stück um Stück vom Schönsten, das sie besessen: das Bewußtsein, ihrem Kinde unentbehrlich zu sein.[18]

Now, in addition to the mother's realization of her son's autonomy is the fear of the danger which awaits him on the battlefield. The laws of nature conflict with the reality of war, when the mothers are asked to release their sons as cannon fodder for the front line. While the grandmother criticizes Maria for taking up residence close to the barracks: 'Also sei mutig - mach' Dein Herz stark und nimm Abschied von ihm, wie tausend und aber tausend Mütter es jetzt tun' (*K*,134), Helene von Mühlau refuses to simplify Maria's pain with a truism.

In her study of the cult of the Virgin Mary, Marina Warner has pointed out that 'in countless Gothic and Renaissance treatments of the Pietà, the slumped body of Christ is disproportionately small and the face of the Virgin anachronistically young in order to recall, with tragic irony, the mother who once held a baby in her arms'.[19] This image, depicted in Foringer's war poster, finds a consistent echo in the German texts, as the female protagonists react to the inhuman demand to sacrifice their sons by retreating into the comforting world of memory when they enjoyed a privileged union with their children. As the women witness their sons becoming soldiers, writers attempt to express the suffering by evoking images of the boys' childhood, as if these visions could ward off the current reality. Frau Eberhard remembers Alf as a child: 'rosig und blond gelockt, ein wildes Kerlchen schon im Kinderröckchen, aber doch zärtlich und ein weiches Gemüt' (*UH*,64), recalling the time when she had sole control over his life: 'Und wenn ich daran denke, wie ich seine kleinen zarten Glieder gewaschen und gebadet habe, wie er an meiner Brust Nahrung trank, wie ich ihn ins gewärmte Bettchen legte...' (*UH*,83-84). That power has been replaced by a

sense of helplessness:

> Und dieser Sohn meines Leibes muß nun unerhörte Qualen erdulden, körperlich und seelisch, und ich darf mich nicht dagegen empören, kann nicht helfen, mit aller meiner heißen Liebe nicht, wo doch meine Adern bluten im Jammer um sein Leiden, Frost und Hunger, Angst, Schmerzen und Tod. Mein Kind, mein liebes Kind. (*UH*,84)

In *Kriegsbriefe der Familie Wimmel* Susanna explains the same mixed emotions: 'Wir Mütter sehen in den heranwachsenden Söhnen und Töchtern immer noch die Kinder, die wir einmal als Wickelbabys ans Herz drückten, und die an unserer Hand die ersten Schritte ins Leben machten' (*KW*,11). There is a sense of oneness with the sons: 'Wir sehen sie als Ergänzungen und Vervielfältigungen des eigenen Ichs an, und sind bestürzt und verwirrt, wenn sie eines Tages als selbständige Menschen vor uns auftreten' (*KW*,11). Now that the child stands alone, the mother has become powerless, unable to protect her son from the dangers outside. This leads to a confusion of emotions which Susanna expresses at the realization that her son must go to war:

> Vor Freude über seine Jünglingsschönheit, seine ranke Gestalt mit den breiten Schultern und dem hellen, lieben Gesicht unter dem dicken, blonden Haarschopf, und vor Angst, daß eine Kugel all dies blühende, lachende Leben dahinraffen könnte. (*KW*,12)

This message finds its expression in a subplot in Tinayre's *La Veillée des Armes*, when the female characters react to the realization that the young boy Lucien Gardave will be going to war:

> Elles admettaient le devoir et le péril pour les hommes, mais ce petit-là, vraiment, ce petit tout frais et tout neuf, qui n'avait pas goûté la vie, sur qui l'on sentait encore les dernières caresses maternelles, ce petit, elles auraient voulu le préserver... (*VA*,249)

The theme is central to *Der Kriegsfreiwillige*, in which Maria Hiller's resentment at releasing her son to the army is an analogy with the mother's desire to cling to her child and to prevent his entry into the world:

> Ich hatte plötzlich das Gefühl, als sei er wieder mein ganz kleines Kind, das ich gegen die Welt schützen müßte [...] immer in dieser schrecklichen Zeit, jetzt lebe ich wieder alles von früher durch - wie er noch ganz mein war - ganz hilflos. (*K*,13)

Such a desire to evoke images of childhood is most strongly felt when the son is in danger - as if there is a longing to return him to a Kristevian semiotic state,[20] which is linked to the pre-Oedipal primary processes and the infant's intense attachment to the mother's body: 'As the addressee of every demand, the mother occupies the place of alterity. Her replete body, the receptacle and guarantor of demands, takes the place of all narcissistic, hence imaginary, effects and gratifications'.[21] Such undercurrents permeate (presumably unconsciously) the work of Helene von Mühlau in *Der Kriegsfreiwillige*, as Maria and Ernst struggle to come to terms with the bonds between mother and child. The absence of a father figure - he died when Ernst was a child - has prevented the normal disruption of the mother/child union. Ernst recognizes this fact in his reproach to his mother 'daß sie ihn von Kind auf zu sehr verpäppelt hat [...] Es hat ihm eben der Vater gefehlt! Wenn er einen Vater gehabt hätte, wäre natürlich manches anders gewesen' (*K*,77). The story hinges upon Ernst's delayed entry into the Symbolic order - the order which is dominated by the Lacanian Law of the father - for he retains that pre-oedipal bond with his mother which has not been broken by the figure of the father. The grandmother writes words of warning to Maria: 'Auseinander müßt Ihr doch, so wie jede Familie jetzt auseinandergerissen wird' (*K*,134), but the mother clings to the 'heiße, wehe, instinkthafte Liebe' (*K*,118)

which demands total possession: 'Der Junge ist mein - mein - mein! Wer hat ein Recht, ihn mir zu nehmen?' (*K*,118). As Maria watches a woman breastfeeding her child, she remembers the past: 'So hat sie einst ihren Ernst gehalten; so wie dies ganz kleine Kindchen hier zur Mutter gehört, hat ihr Junge einst ihr gehört! Unausdenkbar, daß man so eins war, daß so ein Kindchen einmal nichts anderes als ein Stück von der Mutter war' (*K*,188). The son, too, clings to these images when he is frightened or miserable, the image of the womb evoked by Ernst's desire to return to the maternal home: 'Er sitzt mit ihr in der halbdunklen Sofaecke, den Kopf an sie geschmiegt... So geborgen, so warm!' (*K*,104).

When Ernst and his mother pass lovers in the street, the son reverts to this pre-oedipal, incestuous role: 'Der kleine Hiller stutzt jedesmal, wenn er eines sieht, und geht mit seiner Mutter dahin, als seien sie selbst ein glückliches Paar' (*K*,135). Later, when Maria finds a love poem, written by Ernst to his first sweetheart, she reacts like a jealous rival, conscious of the inappropriateness of her feelings: 'Warum will sie anders sein als andere Mütter und den Hauptanteil am Sohn für sich behalten?' (*K*,240).

It is the advent of war which intervenes between woman and child, rupturing the union with mother.[22] The outbreak of war is the moment when Ernst finally comes to break free from the maternal bond and, as he finds his status in the army the mother notices: 'der Ausdruck seiner ernsten Augen, ein Zug um den festen Mund zeigte, daß das kein weiches Kind mehr war, als das er hinausgegangen war, kein abenteuerfroher Junge, sondern ein Mann, der das Leben mit seinen Schrecken in der Tiefe ausgekostet hatte' (*UH*,152). Now the cord which was first broken at childbirth must be psychologically torn a second time.

While this theme is central to *Der Kriegsfreiwillige*, it also finds its

expression in a number of other German texts. With her typical employment of moral values, Helene Christaller treats a similar theme in *Die unsere Hoffnung sind* but does not allow jealousy to impair the Christian atmosphere. The young woman Gabriele 'neidete Frau Eberhard die Vergangenheit' (*UH*,85) and her maternal bond, but this is countered by the mother's acceptance of Alf's first love: 'Gott behüte euch und eure junge Liebe' (*UH*,163) in one of the few instances when a female character welcomes the potential rival for her son's affections.

Notably, it is the departure of the only children or the youngest sons - the breaking of the sole or final bond - which causes the greatest heartache. The same theme is echoed by both Böhme and Viebig. 'Willi ist achtzehn Jahre, hätte er nicht Zeit, bis sie ihn rufen?' (*KW*,11) is Susanna's response to the departure of her young son in *Kriegsbriefe der Familie Wimmel*; while Hedwig Bertholdi cries: 'Ach, das ihr Jüngster auch gegangen war! Erst achtzehn, er hätte es noch nicht nötig gehabt' (*TdH*,6).

Hedwig Bertholdi's sense of betrayal is awakened in *Töchter der Hekuba* when her son Rudolf rejects her company in favour of the charms of Annemarie. The mother who had prepared for her sons' return with 'der ungeduldigen Sehnsucht einer Braut' (*TdH*,85) finds herself excluded by a young woman far more suited to the bridal role.

The philosophy that a mother's love for her son is the only real and lasting bond leads to the creation of a number of highly possessive mother figures in Hedwig Bertholdi, Frau Krüger and Frau Oberst von Loßberg, who are innately suspicious of their sons' choice of female companion. Jealousy intensifies as sexual passions are stimulated by the fever pitch of war. Just as the young couples rush headlong into vows of love, the mothers have no time to

readjust to the idea of 'losing' their sons: 'Hatte er denn so wenig Liebe für seine Mutter, daß er das fremde Mädchen, das er erst so wenige Tage kannte, ihr vorzog?'(*TdH*,112). Boys become men amidst the horror of the battlefield; and the mothers who watch their children leave for the front find it difficult to accept the manly attitudes and desires of the mature figures who return:

> Es war ihr manchmal, als seien das ihre Söhne nicht mehr, an die sie schrieb, als seien es fremde Männer. Längst erwachsene, harte Männer, ihrem Einfluß, dem Einfluß alles Weicheren entzogen. (*TdH*,73)

Despite Hedwig's claims that Annemarie is a pretty but unsuitable wife for her son Rudolf, the voice of reason is offered by her husband, who claims that it is the youngest boy's assertion of his individuality which frightens her most. Rudolf's passion for Annemarie is a sign of Hedwig's decreasing importance in his life: 'Mehr als alle Zukunftssorgen quält es dich, daß du die Liebe deines Sohnes nun teilen mußt' (*TdH*,125). Hedwig's ultimate 'großes Opfer' (*TdH*,122) is born of the fresh memory of her neighbour Frau Krüger and a vision of that possessive mother 'mit ihrem klein gewordenen, vergrämten Gesicht. Die hob wie beschwörend die Hände gegen sie: "Dann ist es am schlimmsten, wenn man böse voneinander gegangen ist"' (*TdH*,121).

This sense of impotence, which is clearly represented in the selected fiction, may transform the concept of sisterhood into images of envy and antagonism, even within a country's borders. Lack of sisterly communion is illustrated in the peace-time scenarios, when Nicolette in *La Veillée des armes* erects a barrier between herself and Simone: 'Jamais, par un sentiment bien féminin, elle n'avait fait de confidences précises à Simone, parce que Simone était trop heureuse' (*VA*,79); or when the female villagers choose to ostracize the

adulterous woman in the *Histoire de Gotton Connixloo*: 'Certes, elles blâmaient Gotton et, devant leurs filles, la traînaient dans la boue' (*GC*,66). Although the advent of war may cause the female characters to speak in grandiose terms of universal bonds between women, the words run the risk of ringing as hollow as the pro-war propaganda.

Surprisingly, there are significantly few occasions when the writers choose to create a sense of communion between women, rather than an overriding feeling of isolation. In Helene Christaller's Christian community of *Die unsere Hoffnung sind* Gabriele and Isolde are linked by their mutual love for Alf: 'Unermüdlich war die eine, von ihm zu erzählen, die andere zu hören. In diesem Punkt verstanden sie sich, ohne daß ein Wort darüber gewechselt worden war' (*UH*,105); Ida Boy-Ed also underlines sisterly bonds in *Die Opferschale* by creating male protagonists who are the source of suffering, leading women to seek comfort within the arms of their own sex: 'Guda lag in den Armen der trostvollen jungen Frau, die ihr mehr noch als Schwester, mehr noch als Mutter sein sollte: das Weib, das aus ahnungsvollem Verstehen heraus auch das Unerklärliche begreift' (*DO*,96); and a similar sense of unspoken unity is described in *Der Kriegsfreiwillige* when Maria watches a mother breast-feeding her child and the memory of this common experience creates a feeling of kinship: 'Ihr ist's, als sei diese Frau ihre Schwester, als gehöre sie ganz eng zu ihr'(*K*,188-189). Separated from her own son by the dictates of the military, Maria seeks consolation within her own sex - but it is a union which lacks power and the possibility of change.

The cosy theory of a female community, linked by a burden of sorrow, is countered by Françoise Vitry in her *Journal d'une veuve de la Guerre* which recounts, in the form of diary entries, her emotions during the first months of

the war until she receives the news of her husband's death and his blood-stained *képi* as a souvenir. She writes of other women's reactions to her plight:

> Mais c'est de la pitié que je lis dans les regards,et aussi de l'égoïsme: "C'est elle qui est veuve, ce n'est pas moi, heureusement!"[23]

In the paralysis which the fictional heroines suffer in the texts, each woman offers up a prayer for the preservation of the man she loves, presumably at the cost of someone else's son or husband. Clara Viebig, whose war novels portray both the community of women on the home front and the disunity which lies within, describes this feeling of natural egoism which divides women rather than unites them in sorrow. In *Das rote Meer* Lili Rossi consoles the newly-widowed Annemarie, but her thoughts focus quickly on her own situation: 'Ein Zittern ging ihr durch die Seele: wie war sie begnadet! Oder würde es ihr auch so gehen wie dieser hier?' (*DrM*,93).

This natural emotion erects a barrier between members of the female sex which Madeleine Pelletier, writing about 'des sentiments de sympathie qui nous font souffrir du malheur de nos semblables', illustrates for her reader in *Dieu, La Morale, La Patrie*:

> cette exagération de la valeur des sentiments altruistes est contraire à la réalité. Dans la pratique d'ailleurs, les protagonistes de l'altruisme se conduisent comme le commun des hommes, c'est à dire en égoïstes. La pitié, la sympathie sont certainement des réalités, mais leur pouvoir est bien faible en comparaison de l'intérêt.[24]

The narrator of *Die Opferschale* asks: 'Gerade so weinten und jauchzten Tausende. Wer hatte noch ein Erlebnis für sich allein?' (*DO*,274), but this selection of texts frequently answers the question with scenes of women living in

virtual separation from one another. Lucie Delarue-Mardrus's emancipated heroine Elisabeth Clèves, separated from the other women of the Malavent household by her inferior social standing, is an extreme example of this wartime exile:

> Dédaigneuse jusque dans le cataclysme universel, elle préférait sa glaciale solitude à l'élan qui rapprochait même Francis de ses semblables, dans un irrésistible besoin d'épanchement, de cordialité, de communion, devant l'incommensurable événement. (*RC*,61)

However, the concentration upon heterosexual relationships in the French novels - with maternal love as a peripheral issue - intensifies the sense of discord between members of the female cast. Wives and lovers encounter rivals for their husband's affections, as the soldier is separated from home and family, prey to temptation from the opposite sex. When Philippe marries his nurse in *L'Oubliée*, his jilted fiancée is tormented by her inferior status to the well-dressed wife: 'Ceci me montra que le ménage de Philippe était plus fortuné que je ne l'eusse fait' (*LO*,264). Denise accepts the victory of her competitor, as if Philippe's evident happiness had cancelled out her own existence: 'On eût dit qu'il était à elle depuis toujours. J'eus l'impression qu'elle me démontrait en toute douceur, en toute bonne foi, et invinciblement, que je n'avais jamais existé' (*LO*,265). There is no outlet for anger at her unfaithful fiancé, but merely deference in the face of her own defeat.

In the German novels female characters accept similar ill-treatment at the hands of their men, yet are also eager to berate other women for their misfortune rather than lay the blame at the male door. In *Töchter der Hekuba*, Gertrud holds Frau Krüger responsible for Gustav's desertion of his paternal responsibilities: 'Oh, sie wußte sehr wohl, die mochte sie nicht leiden, die hatte

es hintertrieben, daß Gustav ehrlich an ihr gehandelt hatte. Aus sich selber hätte der ja niemals gesagt: "Das Kind ist nicht von mir"' (*TdH*,16); Hedwig criticizes Annemarie for leading Rudolf astray: 'Es bäumte sich in ihr auf gegen das Mädchen, das sie vordem doch so verwöhnt hatte. Wenn Annemarie dem Sohn nicht entgegengekommen wäre, würde der gar nicht so sein' (*TdH*,112); and the servant Emilie accuses an unknown Belgian woman of seducing her boyfriend and forcing him to father a child: 'So'n fremdes schamloses Frauenzimmer, die mag ihm gut zugesetzt haben! Nein, ich weiß es wohl, er hat gar nicht dran gedacht, aber sie ist ihm nachgelaufen, an den Hals geworfen hat sie sich ihm, gnädige Frau - oh, man weiß ja, wie die sind!' (*TdH*,87). The women cannot recognize that their men are weak and vulnerable and would rather condemn their own sex than admit that the men they love are spineless. In their misery they are caught up in the trap of patriarchal double-standards which exonerates the male characters and seeks the culprit on their own side.

This breakdown of sisterly bonds which is brought about by the pressures of war is further emphasized by the class divisions. As the novels in this study concentrate upon the bourgeois milieu, the writers may preach messages of unity, but old class divisions remain. The predominantly middle-class writers suffer from an inability to disguise their inherent prejudices against their working-class characters, who fulfil minor roles as 'des bavards et des importuns' (*PIM*,217) or offer the 'Sensationsgier der Ungebildeten' (*UH*,136) and the 'Unwirtschaftlichkeit der Frauen des Volkes' (*DO*,243).

The opening chapters of *La Veillée des armes* introduce the reader to the neighbours of the Parisian street - working-class women who contrast with the bourgeois Davesnes family - in an attempt to add breadth to the social comment rather than as characters in their own right. Simone's love match with François

makes her a social misfit, misunderstood by her own class, yet with a feeling of superiority over the working-class women of her acquaintance. The narrator advocates class hierarchy, claiming that 'l'égalité dans le malheur n'entraîne pas l'égalité dans la souffrance' (*VA*,212), and makes the rather crude generalization that people in the lower reaches of society lack the finer feelings necessary to appreciate the magnitude of their loss:

> Mais plus les êtres sont nuancés et compliqués, plus les grands chocs détruisent en eux des cellules délicates, des fibres ténues infiniment lentes à se reconstituer. Un chêne foudroyé reverdit. Un rosier en fleur, si on le brise, se dessèche. (*VA*,212)

On Tinayre's scale of tragic heroines Simone stands higher than her servant Marie - and Simone's embarrassed recognition that she finds François to be a greater man than Marie's husband, the humble worker Anthime Pourat, is supported by the author's patronizing depiction of the Pourat household. Although Tinayre's introduction expresses sentiments of national unity concerning 'la parenté qui nous lie aux gens de notre race' and 'nos frères et nos soeurs' of the different social classes (*VA*,2), these working-class characters perform functional roles, never treated as seriously by the writer as her central heroine.

Helene von Mühlau expresses a similar sense of disparity between the classes when Maria witnesses the reaction of a working-class woman to her husband's death: 'daß die Frau nun schon wieder ganz ruhig ist, ja geradezu erstaunlich ruhig ist und gefaßt ist, und daß es sie eigentlich enttäuscht hat, daß ein so furchtbarer Schmerz so bald überwunden werden konnte' (*K*,212). On the one hand, the scene is used by the novelist to convey the grandmother's message of necessary wartime resilience:

> Solche Frauen brauchen wir heute, Kind, die sich mit dem Leben abfinden können, das ist jetzt die Hauptsache. Tatsachen hinnehmen und sich sagen: Vorwärts! Nur nicht zurückschauen - nicht grübeln - nicht ändern wollen, was nicht zu ändern ist. (*K*,212)

On the other hand, it is clear that the proletarian woman belongs to a different category from the central female protagonist, who lives a troubled life of inner contemplation. The attempted contrast has a patronizing ring, separating the uncritical working-class woman from the deliberations of the bourgeois heroine.

In contrast, the aristocratic Leuckmer family of *Die Opferschale* have fallen on hard times and felt the mockery of those who noticed 'daß auch sie den Groschen in der Hand umzudrehen gezwungen ist' (*DO*,17). Guda's charity work with people from different classes may give rise to the claim that 'wir mögen keine Rangunterschiede mehr betonen - wir sind alle eines Gefühls' (*DO*,220) - but the fine words are not always supported by the plot.

Perhaps the starkest contrast is found in the work of Böhme and Viebig, who choose similar scenes in their tales but manipulate them for different effect. In *Kriegsbriefe der Familie Wimmel* Susanna writes of the queues for food:

> Die Weiber waren wie toll, schuppsten und knufften, es war kein Vergnügen, und ich wäre am liebsten umgekehrt, wenn der Gedanke an Mann und Kinder, die vielleicht später Hunger leiden müssen, meine Kräfte nicht gewappnet hätte... (*KW*,5)

However, the character of Susanna is used for ironic effect. She is conscious of the pleasure felt by the ordinary people at the thought 'daß die feinen Leute im Krieg auch vielleicht Hungerpfoten saugen würden, und daß jemand sich schämen müsse, sich vorzudrängen, wo doch der Kaiser gesagt habe, es gäbe keine Parteien mehr' (*KW*,6), yet she is also able to mock the 'Schadenfreude' of the lower classes by having her goods delivered by another grocer.

Böhme moves on to another anecdote of bourgeois life, and the angry crowd of poor people is quickly forgotten. In contrast, Viebig makes the misery of the working-class women a central theme of her work without any comic purpose. The aristocratic Frau von Voigt is not the standard caricature, but rather a well-meaning character who is exposed, but not despised, for her naïveté. This rich woman, who has no son fighting at the front, is unaware of the climate of desperation which exists outside the doors of her comfortable home and, coached by her husband, she is the only female character in the novel to express military values, uttering grand, propagandist phrases to a poor widow:

> Sie sind nicht verlassen, liebe Frau. Sie haben noch eine Mutter - unsere deutsche Heimat. Der hat Ihr Mann Sie als Vermächtnis hinterlassen. Er hat Ihnen ein Anrecht erworben. Und unsere deutsche Heimat ist eine gute Mutter, die sich ihrer Kinder annimmt! (*TdH*,56)

The response from the crowd of: 'Redensarten! Das können die Vornehmen und Reichen leicht sagen' (*TdH*,56) merely confirms the hollowness of the patriotic phrases. Viebig delves into the misery lying behind the apparently healthy female employment figures which purport to offer signs of sexual equality. *Töchter der Hekuba* reflects the historical reality when waiting citizens voiced despair rather than jubilation. In a lecture published in 1917 on the effect of the war years on town and country inhabitants, Marie Cauer relates the angry outburst of a farm hand who claims: 'Es ist schon völlig einerlei, ob wir Franzosen und Engländer über uns haben oder Deutsche [...] schlimmer kann es gar nicht mehr kommen. Frieden sollen sie machen, das ist die Hauptsache.'[25]

A desire to expose the subsequent desolation of the working women is displayed by Clara Viebig through Minka Dombrowski's attempts to work the land in her husband's absence, or in the trials of Gertrud, an unmarried mother,

to eke out a living. Here, war work is a necessity rather than a new-found opportunity and, particularly in the sympathetic presentation of Gertrud, is used to demonstrate the woman's exploitation rather than any sense of liberation.

Viebig brings together members of the upper and lower classes by means of both the mistress/servant relationship and chance meetings occasioned by the war. The conversations between Frau von Voigt, the sympathetic but guileless aristocrat, and the poverty-stricken Gertrud are particularly telling, as the latter explains her miserable wages to the lady in the fur coat:

> "Vier Mark fünfzig, wenn ich den ganzen Tag arbeite. Früher nähte ich auch Militärmäntel, das war besser. Aber ich fürchte, es hat auch bald ein Ende mit den Tornistern; das Leder fehlt. Und was ich dann mache?!" Ein düsterer, in sich gekehrter Ausdruck kam in die braunen Augen. "Straßenkehren - wer weiß, das kommt auch noch!" Es fuhr ihr bitter heraus, es war, als ob die Blicke der Dame ihr alles herauszogen.
> (*TdH*,105)

This unexpected encounter in a railway carriage allows the misconceptions of the nobility to confront the suffering of the lower classes. In creating this confrontation Viebig is unique amongst the writers in this thesis. It is only in her writing that the working-class woman receives serious consideration, rather than a walk-on part.

The majority of the novels in this study concentrate upon a predominantly middle-class milieu, in which the perceptions of the factory worker are of little consequence and emotional loss rather than physical hardship forms the central concern of the plots. Viebig counters the images of unity which writers like Marcelle Tinayre and Ida Boy-Ed have attempted to promote in their work. Class divisions are increased, and the gulf between those who make no personal contribution and the women who sacrifice their husbands and sons is a further

chasm created by the war. The message is underlined in *Töchter der Hekuba* by Frau von Voigt's realization that the talk of national unity is nothing more than empty rhetoric:

> Sie sah plötzlich eine große Kluft - wer würde die überbrücken?! Der Krieg, zu dem doch alle auszogen, alle, vornehm und gering, arm und reich? Er hatte es bis jetzt nicht gekonnt. Würde es der Friede können - ? (*TdH*,69/57)

Yet, despite these obvious divisions within society as a whole and in the animosity felt between fictional female characters, there is a consistency of theme and image on the part of the writers which conveys both the universality of war's experience, and an inability to escape from patriarchal similes and metaphors. In Ina Seidel's war poem 'Die Klage der Mädchen' young women bemoan the fate which will befall them if the men they love die in battle, leaving them behind to face an empty future:

> Uns soll man zu Grabe läuten,
> Wenn ihr bleibet in der Schlacht,
> Die ihr uns zu Todesbräuten,
> Nicht zu Müttern habt gemacht.[26]

Heinz Bertholdi's dream of a procession of hundreds of widows, dressed in mourning clothes, takes up the lament with a chorus of young widows in *Töchter der Hekuba*:

> Ihre schwarzen Kleider rochen nach Moder, ihre schwarzen Schleier wehten wie Trauerflaggen. Junge Gesichter, schöne Frauen... Sie klagten im Chor: 'Einsam, einsam, wir sind so einsam, und wir sind noch jung. Unsere Arme sind warm, unsere Herzen sind heiß, wir gehen in Schwarz und trügen doch lieber Rosenrot. Fluch über den Krieg! Er hat uns zu Witwen gemacht.' (*TdH*,97)

There is repetition of the same theme: that the women join together in their suffering, but that they find no strength in sisterly union, but only sorrow that the bonds with the men they love have been broken by the war. Throughout the texts, the focus remains fixed upon the soldier, whether he be son or lover.

In his study of heroines of the war years Louis Barthou spares a thought for the women who know only uncertainty, waiting for news on the home front:

> Songez à ce que renferme ce seul mot: "disparu", qui dit tout parce qu'il ne dit rien. Songez aux mères qui sont... sans nouvelles de leurs enfants, songez aux cauchemars qui hantent leurs nuits, à l'obsession dévorante qui ronge leurs coeurs, à leurs faux espoirs suivis d'abattement, à leurs angoisses qui n'ont pas cessé d'espérer![27]

In the German novels the months of waiting are a time of sleepless nights and visions of death: 'War die sonst hier so reine, ländliche Luft nicht voll von Pulverdampf, von erstickenden Gasen und Blutgeruch?' (*TdH*,74). In *Töchter der Hekuba* some have a vague knowledge of life at the front and are tormented by this 'Fernab- und doch Mittendarin-Sein' (*TdH*,75), while Böhme takes up this theme in a letter from Elisabeth Wimmel to her sister Dora, in which she expresses her sufferings at the departure of the soldier she loves:

> Ich schlafe sehr schlecht in dieser Zeit. In den ersten Nächten nach Heinrichs Auszug schloß ich kein Auge... Wenn der Regen gegen die Fensterscheiben klatschte, sah ich die Soldaten vor mir, wie sie in den Schützengräben liegen bis an die Knie im Schlamm, aller Unbill des Wetters schutzlos preisgegeben. In dem Brausen des Sturmes und Prasseln des Hagels glaubte ich das Heulen der Granaten zu hören und das Knattern der Gewehrkugeln. (*KW*,96)

The theme of 'waiting for news' plays a central role in *Töchter der Hekuba*: 'Ja, das Warten ist schrecklich...Das Allerschrecklichste' (*TdH*,28); and in *Der Kriegsfreiwillige* a woman comments:

> Aber dieses Abschiednehmen, dieses Stillsitzenmüssen, dieses wahnsinnige Bangen und Warten, das nun bevorsteht, dieses Verzweifeln und immer wieder von neuem Hoffen, das ist wohl das Furchtbarste, was dem Menschen geschehen kann. (*K*,40)

Von Mühlau emphasizes this statement by placing the words in the mouth of a serving soldier, as if the recognition of a military man will add greater weight to this assertion:

> Ich möchte jetzt keine Frau sein. Die haben's am allerschlimmsten. Die sitzen allein und vergrämt da und müssen abwarten, was für sie kommt! Abwarten ist das allerschlimmste! (*K*,43)

This message is revealed as a leitmotif of the text, repeated at various intervals either by minor characters or through the narrator's voice, as the soldiers' experience is contrasted: 'Sie brauchen nicht zu denken, sie haben nicht das quälende, bittere Gefühl der Zurückbleibenden, der Abwartenden, die unter der Sicherheit, in der sie noch leben, leiden, während die draußen Blut und Leben für sie hingeben' (*K*,95).

Tinayre expounds the same sentiments as the German writers - that women's passive role brings its particular misery. A cursory remark by a minor character in Tinayre's *La Veillée des armes* forms the substance of *Töchter der Hekuba*, when Nicole exclaims: 'il est plus dur d'appréhender un malheur que de le subir... Je voudrais tirer sur le fil des heures, amener celle qui nous délivrera de cette anxiété' (*VA*,94). Even the glacial Elisabeth Clèves cries in *Un Roman civil* when there is no news from the front: 'Pas de nouvelles.. Pas de nouvelles. Peut-être qu'il est malade... Blessé... Peut-être que... ' (*RC*,212); in *...puis il mourut* Raymonde finds: 'Les heures, jusqu'à celle du courrier venant du front, lui paraissaient interminables' (*PIM*,35); and in *L'Oubliée* Denise, cut off from

news under the occupation, suffers: 'J'avais perdu le sommeil: sans nouvelles de Philippe, sans nouvelles de mes frères, j'étais désespérée' (*LO*,207).

It is the uncertainty which is difficult to bear. 'Mais la femme n'a pas reçu le coup définitif, elle, et elle espère. C'est la loi. Il faut espérer ou mourir,' describes Rachilde (*DP*,49), and the same sentiments are echoed by Helene von Mühlau:

> Die Ärmste, die mit ihren Gedanken in der weiten Welt herumirren muß, die von einer Möglichkeit zu anderen tastet, die heute hofft und morgen in die tiefste Verzweiflung sinkt, sie hat Schlimmeres durchzufechten als die, der eine bittere, furchtbare Tatsache mitgeteilt wird. (*K*,185-186)

For many the knowledge that a soldier is missing is worse than learning the tragic truth of a fatality. The reaction found in *Der Kriegsfreiwillige* that: 'Der Mensch kann alles aushalten - nur Ungewißheit nicht!' (*K*,191) relates aptly to the story of Frau Krüger in *Töchter der Hekuba*.

Nevertheless, the sense of compromise is endemic. Writers like Marcelle Tinayre and Helene von Mühlau portray the private suffering, but constantly fall back upon patriotic platitudes as if afraid to let their remarks retain a cutting edge, continually pulling their punches. Surprisingly, it is Marcelle Tinayre, whose acquiescent war novel came under scrutiny in the third chapter, who pre-empts the pacifist Hélène's Brion's suggestion that 'si les femmes avaient voix au chapitre pour les questions sociales, les choses se passeraient différemment,'[28] but the subject is broached through the peripheral character of Madame Miton:

> S'il y avait des femmes dans les gouvernements, ça serait fini, les guerres! C'est les soldats qui font les batailles, mais c'est les femmes qui font les soldats...Entre nous, on s'entendrait toujours pour sauver nos enfants. (*VA*,143)

Tinayre repeats the theme later in the novel when her heroine Simone contemplates the suffering of women who give 'la chair de leur chair' (*VA*,203) to the army. However, although her belief that 'jamais la menace de mort n'est venue de celles qui soignent les blessés et refont les générations' (*VA*,203) adds further weight, the argument remains in Simone's unspoken thoughts.

In Tinayre's sexual division of labour it is the soldier who concentrates upon the enemy, as we have seen in the earlier chapter, while it is the woman who envisages the suffering: 'il n'en est pas une qui ne pense aux soldats abandonnés dans les sillons, à ceux qui agonisent sur un grabat d'hôpital, aux villages incendiés, aux orphelins errants' (*VA*,203). By raising elements of sexual difference in Simone's silent introspection - so that they are not open to approval or to ridicule - Tinayre is able to air pacifist feelings with minimal controversy. Simone and the women of the neighbourhood act as sounding boards for peace-loving sentiments within the boundaries of their female enclave, while François continues to uphold all the patriotic values which are considered worthy of the military man.

This is the intrusion of the concerns of 1915, when the novel was written, into the patriotic fervour of the mobilization in which the story is set. However, the fact that Simone's response is voiceless, and that she herself is childless, allows the question to be addressed without fear that the heroine's opinions will openly oppose the patriotic tone. The women of the neighbourhood may gather together, but they are silent victims rather than revolutionaries:

> Chose incroyable: ces femmes, assises ou debout, se taisaient. Chacune avait apporté son souci et l'avait mis, en tas, avec les soucis des autres. Ensemble, elles considéraient la grande peine collective. (*VA*,218)

It is ultimately a novel of compromise, in which Simone's development is stunted by propagandist concerns.

In *Der Kriegsfreiwillige* Helene von Mühlau allows her sorrowful heroine to suffer from the fear of war:

> Die ganze Welt in furchtbarer Disharmonie; die ganze Welt voll blutender, zerrissener Herzen, Barbarei, Vernichtung, Greuel und Entsetzen; wo war das Große, das Erhebende, das der Krieg bringen sollte? (*K*,50)

Yet, she quickly interjects with the assurance: 'Ach nein, nur die Nacht, nur der Abschied machten schwach und klein; sobald der bittere persönliche Schmerz überwunden war, mußte eine jede sich zu der Größe aufraffen können' (*K*,50). There is a fear of carrying the bitterness through to its conclusion. She works by contrasts, the patriotic words of the officer when the soldiers swear their allegiance are undercut by the storm outside: 'Die Orgel spielt - der Regen peitscht gegen die Fenster - der Sturm ist zum Orkan geworden; er heult und schreit und winselt ums Gotteshaus' (*K*,155). However, she chooses to end the novel before Ernst's life is set at risk, thereby allowing the patriotic façade to be retained.

In *La Veillée des armes* and *Der Kriegsfreiwillige* none of the female characters go beyond hypothesizing and lamenting the situation; they never actively oppose the bloodshed. The writers' decisions to express alarm through secondary characters or employ a central heroine with an inability to vocalize her feelings serve to emphasize the impotence of women, and suggest an authorial desire to avoid direct controversy, creating a mood which is resigned rather than angry.

Rachilde is one of the few writers to cut across the hypocrisy in *Dans le puits*:

> Comme c'est lent, comme c'est long d'attendre que cette guerre, accroupie sur le monde, achève de dévorer son tas de cadavres, et ils disent, là-bas, dans la capitale qui ne souffre pas encore du vent des pestilences, qu'il faut, pour honorer nos morts, sacrifier d'autres existences, de plus en plus jeunes! (*DP*,139)

She meets her match only in the work of Clara Viebig, who is the sole German writer here to succeed in conveying the futility of war, concentrating upon the suffering, revealing the shallowness of the pro-war rhetoric and stating her case with a fervour that has surprised critics in its exemption from censorship:

> Si l'on se souvient que l'oeuvre de Clara Viebig est parue en 1917, il faut constater d'une part le courage de cette femme qui proteste ouvertement contre les inégalités introduites par la misère provenant directement de la guerre; d'autre part, la laxité relative de la censure qui laisse imprimer, au plus fort de l'affrontement, un livre comportant des accents pacifistes non déguisés.[29]

Das rote Meer was published in 1920 in the knowledge of Germany's defeat, and the bitterness expressed in this post-war work is obvious from the first description of the train loads of departing soldiers, 'die dem Krieg immer neuen Fraß in den Rachen schütten' (*DrM*,5). Yet, unlike the other writers, Viebig also chooses not to begin the earlier *Töchter der Hekuba* with the mobilization, thereby cutting out the initial emotions of enthusiastic war fervour. By opening the story after a year of war, when bloodshed and fear have become the daily diet, it is the relentlessness of the suffering which is emphasized.

In the first pages of *Töchter der Hekuba* she rejects the jingoistic fare of the pro-war propagandists, condemning the war through the maternal figure of

Hedwig Bertholdi. While the male characters utter the standard phrases: 'War es denn nicht selbstverständlich, daß die Söhne draußen waren, gesunde, kräftige Menschen? Wenn alle Mütter ihre Söhne nun hätten zurückhalten wollen, was dann?' (*TdH*,5), the women see beyond such patriotic clichés: 'Nur die Mütter sahen, wie es wirklich war; die ahnten, wie es kommen würde. Gekommen war.' (*TdH*,6) While the male protagonists cling to images of glory, the female characters continuously convey the misery of war:

> Falsche Propheten, die damals verheißen hatten: wenn der erste Schnee fällt, läuten die Glocken Frieden. Es war mehr daraus geworden, als nur ein kurzer Marsch durch Feindesland, als ein keckes Draufgehen, ein rascher Sieg. Der Schnee war gefallen und geschmolzen, Grün war ersprossen und erstorben - Frühling, Sommer, Herbst - Tag um Tag, Woche um Woche, Monat um Monat. Und wiederum war es Winter geworden, Frühling und Sommer. Nur die Natur hatte ihr Kleid verändert, unverändert stand noch der Krieg. Breit, groß, unerbittlich; jetzt schon fast mit grausamer Selbstverständlichkeit. Es roch nach Blut. (*TdH*,6)

While Helene Christaller manipulates the news of military success to uplift downcast hearts in *Die unsere Hoffnung sind*, Clara Viebig gathers together a group of women to listen to the church bells ringing for an early military victory, she includes figures in the crowd for whom the triumph has come too late: the widow left alone to care for the children and the family business; and a childless woman left destitute by the death of her husband:

> Sie wollte niemandes Mitleid, es brauchte sich keiner um sie zu kümmern, sie hatte auch keinen nötig, leben wollte sie ja nicht mehr. Sich verkriechen wie ein krankes Tier und sterben, das wollte sie. (*TdH*,55)

The national propaganda in Germany also preaches unity amongst the female sex:

> In dieser Zeit muß das Persönliche in den Hintergrund treten. Im Felde steht Arm und Reich, Vornehm und Gering, Schulter an Schulter. Und so sollte es auch unter den Frauen sein.[30]

However, in Viebig's stories private feelings overtake the sense of national communion. The common burden of anxiety may bring women into close physical proximity as they crowd around the military dispatches at the station to seek news of sons and lovers, stand in the queues for food, and rush onto the streets when the victory bells ring - but the spatial closeness is not always reflected in the inner emotions.

Patriotic ideals conflict with personal happiness. Bonds of marriage, kinship and friendship undergo an ordeal which may strengthen established ties or weaken alliances based on frail foundations. In comparison to a sense of camaraderie in the trenches found in much male war literature, where soldiers depended upon their comrades for survival, the women are isolated in their jealous concern for their husbands and sons, and cut off from the men they love by both the physical distance of the battlefield and the barriers of experience which will be erected between the sexes.

As the years go by the faces grow tired and bitter, as Frau von Voigt comes to observe in *Töchter der Hekuba*: 'Immer sah sie die Frau vor sich, der die finsteren Haarsträhnen in die blasse Stirn hingen. Und so waren viele. Ein Heer von müden, vergrämten, verbitterten Gesichtern stürmte gegen sie an' (*TdH*,221) and the crowds become restless as the aggressiveness of the trenches permeates the home environment. By the conclusion of Viebig's second war novel the atmosphere of living for the moment has begun to lose its hold. As Germany's defeat looms, even the pleasure-loving Annemarie begins to plan for the future, choosing to marry an older, wealthy industrialist rather than a poor

but handsome soldier. There is a growing sense of uncertainty and disillusionment as Germany is shipwrecked on 'Das rote Meer' - a symbol of the human blood spilled in the war and the tide of Communism which threatens to sweep over the country.

In *Das rote Meer*, written in the knowledge that Germany has lost the war, Clara Viebig finally cuts away all the patriotic trappings with Hedwig Bertholdi's reaction to the death of Rudolf:

> Fluch über die, die diesen Krieg über uns gebracht haben - Fluch über sie alle, alle! Fürs Vaterland gefallen - Vaterland! was ist mir das?! Rudolf, mein Sohn, mein lieber, lieber Junge! (*DrM*,39)

In Viebig's story the changing emotions found in women's writing come full circle. From the male/female bond which forms the original premise of the war story, subsequently overturned by the disruption in gender relations, the reaction is not female autonomy, but a desire to return to the status quo:

> Aber aus Blut und Asche erhebt sich eine Sehnsucht, großen Auges, mit weißen Schwingen: die Sehnsucht, hinwegzufliehen, zu neuen Ufern, fern diesem Meere. O selige Beruhigung, hoffnungsfreudige Zuversicht, ein Häuschen zu wissen, still und friedlich unter schattendem Baum, dort Mann und Weib! Die Insel der Liebe, der Hafen des Heims, das einzige Glück, das jetzt noch dem Menschen verbleibt. (*DrM*,266)

Viebig contemplates no other way forward than this traditional image of heterosexual love.

While the general absence of overtly pacifist messages is understandable in an atmosphere of censorship, the portrayal of women's reactions within the accepted limitations is the decision of the writer. In this selection of work, the novelists have offered images of women still dependent upon the male sex for

their happiness or sorrow. The themes of universal sisterhood and female liberation may raise their head, but they are finally submerged beneath the overriding emotion of suffering.

In war, when women describe their own fate, it is tied to the destiny of men: lovers who may return to make them wives, sons who may come home to give them comfort, and husbands who may die and leave them widows. Beyond the confines of their personal relationships is the power of the male rulers and military leaders, who brought the war upon their nations in the beginning.

Yet, away from the divisions imposed by patriarchal and propagandist leaders, the reiteration of similar themes and perspectives both within and across a country's boundaries reveals that there is a unity and a sense of purpose between the novelists who penned the war literature of 1914-1918, which is seen only when one looks across the range of texts. The novelists depict a war which has destroyed lives and threatened maternal, sexual and sisterly bonds, but if each writer were to compare her work with that of her neighbours, she would be aware of the similarity of theme and emotional expression. As Marie Cauer explains in her 1917 article about life on the home front *Wer hat Recht?*:

> Jeder übersieht eben nur seine eignen Schwierigkeiten und hält es bei den andern für Mangel an gutem Willen, daß sie ihm diese Schwierigkeiten bereiten oder doch nicht aus dem Wege räumen, während sie in Wahrheit seine Leidensgefährten sind.[31]

External forces have caused this sense of disunity; and the writers do not empower their female characters to overcome the divisions.

Therefore, whether these novels proclaim patriotic spirit or pacifist opposition, the tone is noticeably untriumphal. Tinayre may end *La Veillée des armes* with the word 'victoires', but the final image is that of François and

Simone sorrowfully parting in uncertainty of their future. Delarue-Mardrus, Landre and Mayran similarly conclude with their heroines mourning the men they have loved. Although they do not allow their protagonists to undergo long-drawn-out suffering, they acknowledge the reality of death or the sense of loss.

In the patriotic German novels, the female protagonists are left in a state of uncertainty about the future of their soldiers, and it is here that faith in God is used to paper over the cracks. Writing in 1916, Helene Christaller attempts to raise morale by ending *Die unsere Hoffnung* with a vision of the returning soldiers and the victory celebrations: 'Und wir Mädchen lösen unsere Haare zum goldenen Schleier und tragen Blumenkränze in den Locken und weiße Kleider, die Geliebten zu empfangen, die so viel erduldet haben' (*UH*,215). Yet, when asked when this will be, Frau Eberhard can only reply: 'Wenn Gottes Stunde ist, mein Kind. Wir aber wollen Seiner warten und unsere Lampen brennend erhalten, denn diese Erde ist sehr dunkel' (*UH*,216). Ida Boy-Ed achieves a little elation with Katharina's final patriotic speech, but the concluding words: 'Euer Vermächtnis wird erfüllt' (*DO*,435), which recall the ending of *Der Kriegsfreiwillige*: 'Nicht weinen! Der Junge steht in Gottes Hand!'(*K*,293), are a reminder of the powerlessness of the protagonists. The final poignant image of *Töchter der Hekuba* is of the councillor's wife, contemplating peace in the wake of the death of her three sons.

It is this consistency of theme and female response which is most striking in these tales. Although female characters may be driven apart by major social divisions and petty jealousies, the nature of the female characters' individual suffering is repeated from text to text, with the questions being asked: Does the greatest anguish come from self-sacrifice or the sacrifice of loved ones? Is the active trauma of the battlefield preferable to sleepless nights of passive fear?

These are the subjects which the canonical male war novels are uninterested in or unable to tackle from a female perspective, and it is left to women themselves to convey women's internal suffering in war which is experienced far away from the reality of the conflict.

The experience of many male writers was that 'they were trying to convey unprecedented events and sensations armed only with a vocabulary and literary techniques fashioned for other times and other circumstances.'[32] Although women writers remain caught up in a similar trap, retreating into unoriginal images and metaphors in their attempt to express their suffering, they struggle to escape the jingoism and hierarchical oppositions. Yet, while they may fail to develop an authentic 'parole de femme', they succeed in transcending the conventional limitations of male war literature to offer their own responses to the 1914-1918 conflict. There is not one 'female voice', but many voices echoing the misery of those who are asked to sacrifice their husbands and children, uniting French and German women in a sense of common suffering.. These responses, muffled or silent within male canonical fiction, find their expression in women's literature of the First World War.

NOTES

1 See Sydney Janet Kaplan's chapter 'Varieties of feminist criticism' in *Making a Difference: Feminist Literary Criticism* edited by Gayle Greene and Coppélia Kahn (London: Methuen, 1985), p.52.

2 Gertrud Bäumer, *Weit hinter den Schützengräben* (Jena: Eugen Diederichs, 1916), p.189.

3 See the introduction to *Feminist Literary Theory. A Reader*, edited by Mary Eagleton (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987), p.2.

4 Madeleine Vernet, *Hélène Brion. Une Belle Conscience et une sombre affaire* (Epone (S et O): 'L'Avenir Social', 1917), p.4.

5 Lida Gustava Heymann quoted in Renate Wurms, '"Krieg dem Krieg" - "Dienst am Vaterland"' in *Geschichte der Frauenbewegung* edited by Florence Hervé (Köln: Pahl-Rugenstein Verlag, 1983), p.100.

6 Marcelle Capy, *Une Voix de femme dans la mêlée* (Paris: Ollendorf, 1916), p.24.

7 Fernand Corcos, *La Paix? oui si les femmes voulaient!* (Paris: Editions Montaigne, 1929), p.39.

8 Claire Studer married Yvan Goll in 1921 and was also known by the name Claire Goll. For further biographical details see Gisela Brinker-Gabler, Karola Ludwig and Angela Wöffen, *Lexikon deutschsprachiger Schriftstellerinnen 1840-1945* (München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1986), pp.109-110; and Elke Friederiksen, *Women Writers of Germany, Austria and Switzerland* (New York, Westport, Connecticut, London: Greenwood Press, 1989), pp.83-84.

9 Claire Studer, *Die Frauen erwachen* (Frauenfeld: Verlag Huber & Co., 1918), p.134.

10 Margarete Henschke, *Der Krieg und die Frauen* (Berlin: Protestantischer Schriftenvertrieb, 1915), p.4.

11 *Ibid.*, p.15.

12 Gertrud Bäumer, *op.cit.*, p.151.

13 *Ibid.*, p.152.

14 Malita von Rundstedt, *Der Schützengraben des deutschen Mädchens* (Berlin-Dahlem: Verlag: Evang.Verband zur Pflege der weiblichen Jugend Deutschlands, 1916), p.3.

15 Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), p.119.

16 Julia Kristeva, *Histoires d'amour* (Paris: Editions Denoël, 1983), pp.313-314.

17 See Marina Warner, *Alone of all her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (London: Picador, 1990), p.210.

18 Thea von Harbou, *Die deutsche Frau im Weltkrieg* (Leipzig: Hesse & Becker Verlag, 1916), p.111.

19 Marina Warner, *op.cit.*, p.209.

20 See Toril Moi's chapter on Kristeva entitled 'Marginality and Subversion' in *Sexual/Textual Politics*, (London: Methuen, 1985), pp.150-173.

21 Julia Kristeva, 'Revolution in Poetic Language' in *The Kristeva Reader* edited by Toril Moi (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), p.101.

22 See Nelly Furman's chapter 'The politics of language: beyond the gender principle?' in *Making a Difference: Feminist Literary Criticism*, edited by Gayle Greene and Coppélia Kahn (London and New York: Methuen, 1985), p.70.

23 Françoise Vitry, *Journal d'une veuve de la Guerre* (Paris: La Maison française d'Art et d'Edition, 1919), p.90.

24 Madeleine Pelletier, *Dieu, La Morale, La Patrie* (Paris: V. Giard & E.Brière, 1910), p.83.

25 Marie Cauer, *Wer hat recht?* (Berlin: Otto Eisner, 1917), p.5.

26 Ina Seidel, *Neben der Trommel her* (Berlin: Egon Fleischel & Co, 1915), p.9.

27 Louis Barthou, *L'Effort de la Femme française* (Paris: Bloud & Gay, 1917), pp.5-6.

28 Hélène Brion, *Déclaration lue au premier conseil de guerre le 29 mars 1918* (Courbevoie: La Cootypographie, 1918), pp.6-7.

29 Léon Riegel, *Guerre et littérature* (Paris: Editions Klincksieck, 1978), p.218.

30 Rosa Anderson, *Wie können sich die Frauen in der Kriegszeit nützlich machen?* (Trier: Verlagshandlung von Joseph Linz, 1914), p.15.

31 Marie Cauer, *op.cit.*, p.15.

32 John Cruickshank, *Variations on Catastrophe* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), p.28.

CONCLUSION

Perhaps anxious to discover a redeeming feature amidst the human carnage, commentators have popularly cited the First World War as a noteworthy stage in the struggle for female equality, as the departure of young and healthy male citizens for the front line meant that necessity opened the doors on areas of experience which had previously been barred to the female sex. Yet, it is clear that this emancipatory move is only one facet of a war that 'constituted a rupture in the life that went before it, uprooting the nineteenth-century values that had tenaciously persisted into the twentieth century'.[1] A war of such unprecedented scale would leave more than one mark upon the civilian population.

Women emerged from the nineteenth century - when campaigning feminists put forward the theories of female equality and asserted their rights against a background of male dominance - to be confronted by a patriarchal war on a scale which no-one had predicted. Writing in March 1918, Hélène Brion compared the events of the preceding years to the Franco-Prussian war, claiming that the effect of the lesser conflict had prevented a war for forty years in Europe, and comparing that outcome with the result of the battles still raging:

> Calculez que nous luttons, en ce moment, non pas depuis six mois, mais depuis 44 mois pleins, d'une lutte fantastique, formidable, où sont aux prises, non pas deux nations seulement, mais plus de vingt, qui sont l'élite du monde, dit civilisé, que toute la race blanche ou presque dans la mêlée, que la race jaune et la race noire y ont été entrainées à sa suite, et dites-vous, je vous en prie, que dès maintenant votre but est atteint! car l'épuisement du monde est tel, que plus de cent ans de paix nous seraient assurés dès maintenant, si la guerre finissait ce soir.[2]

No-one had been prepared for the tragedy of 1914-1918. 'The Great War may not therefore have been 'unique', in the strictest sense of the term...' but it was perceived as an unprecedented event by male writers 'precisely because there was no point of reference in their own prior experience to which it could be related'.[3] This claim is equally valid for the women writers of the period.

The women whose work forms the focus of this thesis were in a position of influence as the 'femmes de lettres' of their day, yet reliant on male approval for the publication of their manuscripts and unable to flout authority without risk to their livelihood. Written at a time of transition in women's history, their reflections on war provide representations of the women-centred experience of war, when both men and women struggled to find their identity, feminism in its fledgling form conflicted with traditional anti-feminist doctrines, and pacifist values clashed with nationalist propaganda. In the ideological battle conducted upon the printed page, women writers offer glimpses of female equality, and yet finally submit in the face of a war that made them prisoners of their own fears and suffering.

As in Foringer's war poster image of the Red Cross nurse cited in the Introduction, the literary texts offer mixed metaphors as conflicting themes and ideologies struggle to take centre stage. In the first instance it is the maternal figure of the nurse which catches the attention, and it is 'aux qualités féminines qu'on fait appel, c'est elles qu'on exalte, comme pour se rassurer sur une féminité éternelle, de l'hôpital à l'usine...'[4] The subsequent traditional hierarchical oppositions come into view, in which the superior male is served by his inferior female partner. When the scenes of the mobilization form part of the diegesis, all the texts conform, to some extent, to this binary system, raising the soldier to heroic status in his active role and leaving the woman humble and

passive.

Then there is a switch of emphasis and a re-drawing of the lines in the sexual conflict. Women have come to govern their 'Herland' far from the fighting front and, when there is a reunion of the sexes, it takes place in this 'royaume des femmes' which the men may enter only on temporary passes, or on stretchers. Hélène Cixous writes of the traditional 'Privilège mâle, qui se marque dans l'opposition dont il se soutient, entre *l'activité* et *la passivité*'[5] but, in the upheaval occasioned by the war, many men find themselves in the *inactive* role. The unarmed civilians unfit for military service, the soldiers immobilized in the trenches, or the wounded victims in the arms of the Red Cross nurse find that the perspective has been altered, as in Foringer's picture, with the impotent male at the mercy of the women.

Yet this shift in the traditional hierarchy does not lead to a permanent change of status for the female protagonists. There is a third scene - the one which is shadowy or absent in canonical works of the period - in which women mourn for the men they have lost or suffer for the soldiers in danger. Despite the ultimate failure in creating a 'parole de femme', falling back on the traditional patriarchal image of the *mater dolorosa*, women writers succeed in expressing their responses to war which are ignored or marginalized by the established male authors of the First World War.

These three themes are apparent in each of the texts, but the ideological stance of the writer leads to a variation in emphasis. Tinayre's *La Veillée des armes*, set in the bellicose atmosphere of the mobilization, is rooted in the first perspective with its concentration upon binary oppositions. In contrast, Viebig's work is embedded in the suffering of war and the senselessness of human sacrifice.

The novels convey this fluctuation of priorities. Marcelle Tinayre strives to create a sense of marital equality in *La Veillée des armes*, but her heroine acquiesces in the face of propaganda. Helene von Mühlau presents male weakness in *Der Kriegsfreiwillige*, undermining military values, but never succeeds in depicting female strength. The irony in Margarete Böhme's *Kriegsbriefe der Familie Wimmel* is able to cut through the pro-war rhetoric, but the text remains within traditional boundaries and the suffering is displaced to minor characters. In contrast, the patriotic tone of *Un Roman civil* is countered by Lucie Delarue-Mardrus's undermining of sexual roles, in which the male anti-hero struggles to maintain his self-esteem under the castratory gaze of the female sex. Jeanne Landre's independent female protagonist in *...puis il mourut* is weakened by the reliance on stereotypical imagery; and the desire to create an autonomous heroine in *Die Opferschale* is upset by Ida Boy-Ed's use of women as mouthpieces for patriotic propaganda. The cosy world created in *Die unsere Hoffnung sind* is shaken by war's disruption of patriarchal standards, as Helene Christaller lets the tone remain determinedly patriotic, but raises the issue of war's destruction in the margins. Colette's patriotic anecdotes in *Les Heures longues* may be balanced by Rachilde's cynicism in *Dans le puits*, in which the writer sets up the clichés and then strives to demolish them. The Catholic heroines offered by Camille Mayran are the servants of the Church, but find their own form of salvation without male assistance. And Clara Viebig's work remains rooted in a traditional patriarchal society, but destroys the 'heroic images' of war with her savage indictment of the leaders who caused it.

Yet, above and beyond this conflict of interests, perhaps the strongest message which emerges from these fictional depictions of war is the amount of common ground shared by the novelists of both France and Germany. Nelly

Roussel, writing of the consequences of war in 1914, stressed:

> Or, cet ennemi-là n'est jamais, ne peut pas être, un peuple tout entier. Car un "peuple" se compose de trop d'éléments divers, de tendances contradictoires. Il n'est pas de peuple où chacun de nous ne puisse trouver des âmes-soeurs, alors que parmi nos compatriotes, beaucoup nous sembleront toujours des étrangers. La haine entre les peuples n'est point - quoi qu'on en ait dit - un sentiment naturel, instinctif; elle est une création monstreuse de ceux qui ont, ou croient avoir, intérêt aux conflits armés.[6]

Throughout a close reading of the texts, one is conscious of the similarities rather than the contrasts between the work of women writers on opposing sides of the barbed wire fence. The writers unconsciously undermine the war patriots in the women's movement who attempted to transform the women across the border into enemies in spirit as well as in political terms. A reading of the fiction of both nations, written in isolation from each other, reveals more affinities than disparities in women's treatment of the theme of war, as they reflected the same concerns and similar responses to the conflict.

As Jon Glover points out: 'even if the languages of Europe were not common, language itself was, and in a world in which the individual was valued only as expendable material words affirmed that the individual existed and was capable of independent action. The war *demanded* a written response and the very act of articulation formed the basis of an imaginative self-assertion that might develop into a common bond of protest and warning'.[7] Separated by man-made barriers, the writers of both countries revealed à view of women which transcended the distortions of propaganda and spoke of love rather than conflict.

However, as has been stated, the horror of war did not lead to the historical development of a universal sisterhood, or bring women together to confront their mutual tragedy. The roots of this may be seen in the fictional texts,

with women finding themselves isolated in their misery, despite the fact that the causes of their suffering were common. There is no sense of the camaraderie of the trenches found in much male war literature, but of a certain jealousy in their pain. Rather than capitalizing on their non-combatant status, the majority of women in the feminist movement allowed the barriers imposed upon them by their patriarchal leaders to drive a wedge into the international women's movement, and the reflections of this historical reality may be seen in the private tragedy expressed in women's war writing.

Even those women who did enjoy the scope offered by war work were to find their new-found opportunities of short duration. As the Armistice dawned, women were expected to relinquish the tasks they had dutifully shouldered during the conflict.

> En trois ans, elles ont réalisé autant de progrès qu'en cinquante ans de lutte. Mais ces progrès ne leur apparaissent pas comme suffisamment assurés. Les hommes qui, contraints, ont accepté leur collaboration, considèrent les situations acquises par les femmes comme provisoires, prétendent refermer sur elles, à la paix, les portes du gynécée et se refusent obstinément à consacrer les modifications de fait de leur situation par des changements législatifs.[8]

On the 13th November 1918 the women of France were told that they could best serve their country by abandoning their wartime role and returning to their former occupations.[9] German women were also ousted from their new-found jobs on the return of the soldiers.

While demonstrating their patriotic devotion to their respective homelands, there is no doubt that many feminist activists had hoped to win recognition for their four years of service to the war effort, packaged in the form of the long-sought-after goal of female suffrage. Yet, in victorious France women

received no political reward for their war efforts, and when the question of suffrage was debated at the Senate on the 7th November 1922 it was defeated by 155 votes to 134:

> Plus que pour manier le bulletin de vote, les mains des femmes sont faites pour être baisées, baisées dévotement quand ce sont celles des mères, amoureusement quand ce sont celles des femmes et des fiancées.[10]

Facing such an attitude within the parliamentary system, it is perhaps not surprising that the women of France had to endure a second World War before achieving recognition of their political status in 1944.

On the surface, German women appear to have been more successful. The achievement of the vote in 1918 cannot be linked solely to the war effort, for the *SPD* was fulfilling a commitment to female suffrage which had implicitly been made in the Gotha Programme of 1875,[11] but the timing of the legislation could be used to appease misogynist opponents, by stressing the valiant nature of women's wartime role and the justness of their reward.

However, political franchise did not dramatically improve the female lot within defeated Germany. Political opportunities for women in the Weimar Republic were restricted and, by integrating the bourgeois feminist movement into the war service and finally into parliament, women had lost their punching power as extra-parliamentary opposition. They were now forced to toe the line rather than exist as anarchists outside the system. Socialist pacifists also found their role less significant because the foundation of the League of Nations appeared to remove the necessity for an independent women's Peace Movement.[12]

When war ended the women of both France and Germany were expected

to give up their recently acquired autonomy and return to the home, their particular suffering forgotten in the post-war analysis. 'Il y a plus inconnu encore que le Soldat: sa femme' was the message attached to a floral tribute, carried by a French feminist delegation to the Parisian tomb of the Unknown Soldier in August 1970. Writing of this action in the *Histoires du MLF*, Anne Tristan claimed: 'En déposant cette gerbe, nous dénonçions de façon spectaculaire et à la fois humoristique notre oppression.'[13]

The memorial at the Arc de Triomphe was an apt setting for this consciousness-raising demonstration, as women are excluded from the patriotic eulogies in a society which defines war in the narrow sense of military action and treats the number of dead and injured men as impersonal statistics, rather than as the tally of human loss and suffering. The women whose men lay as faceless corpses upon the battlefield receive no monument from the State, for their passive sacrifice does not inspire an equivalent sense of national gratitude.

Yet, whilst the roll of honour may give glory to men, it also announces the fact that, amidst the carnage of the First World War, it was women who survived. 'Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori' is the 'old lie'[14] and the jingoistic phrases do not disguise the certainty that the widows and mothers deprived of their children retain the gift of life. Women were left to mourn the lost generation of young men, but also to celebrate their own survival with a feeling that 'rien n'est plus comme avant.'[15] Women's writing of 1914-1918 gave a voice to those women who watched the fledgling feminist movement founder under the weight of patriotism and witnessed innocent young men leave for the front to be transformed into canon fodder.

In analysing these novels there has been no intention to rank the texts in order of merit, but it cannot be ignored that the ones which have suffered most

with the passing of time are those where jingoism overrides human emotion. As John Cruickshank states in his analysis of male French writers of the First World War:

> It is significant that the writers whom we find unreadable today are exclusively those who recognized no problem or who believed that unprecedented suffering could be satisfactorily expressed in terms of a traditional heroic and chivalric nineteenth-century rhetoric.[16]

It is perhaps for this reason that Clara Viebig's refusal to take on board the hollow phrases of patriotic propaganda in *Töchter der Hekuba* endows her work with a more timeless appeal than the other novels analysed here. When the war rhetoric has been exposed as hollow, the fear and suffering of women on the home front retains its validity. Nevertheless, I would argue that the period-piece atmosphere of the selected texts makes them valuable documents for critics of war literature, for these novels reflect the variety of emotions and values which struggled for recognition at this historical crossroads.

This analysis of selected French and German texts has made an incursion into women's literary legacy of the First World War, reassessing a range of female fictional responses to the events of 1914-1918 and shedding new light on traditional images of war. In *Les Croix de bois* Dorgelès describes how the tired soldiers, forced to march ceremoniously through a village, are conscious of the reaction of the crowd:

> Une femme pleura, puis d'autres, puis toutes... C'était un hommage de larmes, tout le long des maisons, et c'est seulement en les voyant pleurer que nous comprîmes combien nous avions souffert.[17]

The writers studied in this thesis reveal how much women have cried, helping to

bridge the chasm of misunderstanding which war created between the sexes. Their work allows female voices to be heard, complements and enhances the visions of conflict found in canonical male fiction, and thereby increases our knowledge of the First World War.

NOTES

1 See Shari Benstock, *Women of the Left Bank. Paris 1900-1940* (London: Virago, 1987), p.5.

2 Hélène Brion, *Déclaration lue au Premier Conseil de Guerre le 29 mars 1918* (Courbevoie, La Cootypographie, 1918), p.14.

3 John Cruickshank, *Variations on Catastrophe* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), p.30.

4 Françoise Thébaut, *La Femme au temps de la guerre de 14* (Paris: Editions Stock, 1986), p.9.

5 Hélène Cixous and Catherine Clement, *La Jeune née* (Paris: Union Générale des Editions, 1975), p.117.

6 Nelly Roussel, *Paroles de Combat et d'Espoir* (Epône: Edition de l'Avenir Social, 1919), pp.60-61.

7 See the introduction to *The Penguin Book of First World War Prose* edited by Jon Glover and Jon Silkin (London: Penguin Books, 1990), p.10.

8 Léon Abensour, *Histoire Générale du Féminisme: Des Origines à nos jours* (Paris: Librairie Delagrave, 1921), pp.310-311.

9 Léon Abensour, *Le Problème de la démobilisation féminine* (Paris: La Grande Revue, Janvier 1919), p.82.

10 Jean Rabaut, *Histoire des féminismes français* (Paris: Stock, 1978), p.273.

11 Jean H Quataert, *Reluctant Feminists in German Social Democracy*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), p.93.

12 See 'Mit dem Rücken zur Wand' in *Ariadne*, Kassel: Almanach des Archivs der deutschen Frauenbewegung, Heft 4 (March 1986), pp.8-9.

13 Annie de Pisan and Anne Tristan, *Histoires du MLF* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1977), p.55.

14 Wilfred Owen, 'Dulce Et Decorum Est' in the *Penguin Book of First World War Poetry*, edited by Jon Silkin, Second Edition (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd, 1983), p.183.

15 Françoise Thébaud, *op.cit.*, p.12.

16 John Cruickshank, *op.cit.*, p.34.

17 Roland Dorgelès, *Les Croix de bois* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1919), p.303.

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