

## GENDER, WAR, AND POLITICS: THE WARS OF REVOLUTION AND LIBERATION— TRANSATLANTIC COMPARISONS, 1775–1820

Conference at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, May 17–19, 2007. Jointly organized by the GHI, the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and Duke University. Additional support provided by the French Consulate General in Atlanta, Kings College London, and the Research Group “Nations, Borders, Identities: The Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars in European Memories” (FU/TU Berlin and York University). Conveners: Gisela Mettele (GHI), Karen Hagemann (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill).

Participants: Katherine Aaslestad (West Virginia University), Matthew Brown (University of Bristol), Dirk Bönker (Duke University), Ann Campbell (US Coast Guard Academy Foundation), Thomas Cardoza (Truckee Meadows Community College), Sarah Chambers (University of Minnesota), Anna Clark (University of Minnesota), Linda Colley (Princeton University), Elizabeth Colwill (San Diego State University), Christopher Dandeker (Kings College, London), Catherine Davies (University of Nottingham), Laurent Dubois (Michigan State University), Stefan Dudink (Radboud University, Nijmegen), Kathleen DuVal (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill), David Eltis (Emory University), Alan Forrest (University of York), Barbara Harris (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill), Brian Holden Reid (Kings College, London), Lynn Hunt (University of Los Angeles), Sherry Johnson (University of Florida), Catriona Kennedy (University of York), Gregory T. Knouff (Keene State College), Richard Kohn (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill), Wolfgang Koller (Free University of Berlin), Claudia Kraft (University of Erfurt), Lloyd S. Kramer (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill), Wayne E. Lee (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill), Ruth Leiserowitz (Free University of Berlin), Patricia Lin (University of California, Berkeley), Emma V. Macleod (University of Stirling), Alexander M. Martin (University of Notre Dame), Holly A. Mayer (Duquesne University, Pittsburgh), John McGowan (Institute for Arts and Humanities), Terence V. McIntosh (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill), Judith Miller (Emory University), Cecilia Morgan (University of Toronto), Mary Beth Norton (Cornell University), David O'Brien (University of Illinois, Urbana), Karen Racine (University of Guelph), Jane Rendall (University of York), Alex Roland (Duke University), Jay Smith (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill).

This extremely successful and stimulating meeting brought together ninety scholars of different generations from four countries. These scholars, who work on war, gender, race, and national liberation during the period between 1775 and 1820, met to address how these powerful forces intersected during the revolutionary era. The rise of the modern military and modern warfare emerged as the common touchstones among all scholars as they sought to explore how wars, in particular wars associated with independence or liberation, emerged as key sites in the negotiation and construction of new gender norms and national identities. All participants probed the degree to which novel forms of mass mobilization for war contributed to increasingly rigid notions of masculinity and femininity, despite the obvious fact that women participated in the war effort in military institutions and civilian society. A collected volume of selected and revised papers is in progress.

Following a warm welcome by hosts Lloyd S. Kramer, Gisela Mettele, and Alex Roland, Karen Hagemann, the main organizational force behind the conference, presented an introductory lecture in which she discussed the state of research and developed a gendered concept for the analysis of this period of the first modern world wars. These conflicts, fought with mass armies, were variously legitimated as "revolutionary wars," "national wars," or "wars of liberation." Despite exciting new scholarship on this era, she pointed out that much remains overlooked. The past dearth of collaboration between military, social, and gender historians has contributed to the general omission of the gendered dimensions of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century warfare. Hoping that this conference would change that state of affairs, she proposed a gendered concept of "total war" of the revolutionary era that would require scholars to sharpen perceptions of the far-reaching consequences of the various modes of mass mobilization for war and mass warfare for the state, the military, the economy, society, and culture. This approach must look beyond the military and the conduct of war, to the relationship between the state and the nation, as well as to relationships between the so-called "combat front" and "home-front," soldiers and civilians, and men and women. She pointed to the apparent paradox of revolutionary and Napoleonic warfare. On the one hand, war offered new and rich opportunities for men and women to redefine their relationship to their state and nation as combatants and civilians. At the same time, however, war seemed to strengthen an emerging and less flexible gender order that assigned all men the responsibility of defending their homes and states while defining all women as mothers and housewives regardless of their social status.

The first panel, entitled "Gender, War, and Empires," featured the Caribbean, South America, and the Atlantic World. David Eltis com-

menced with a discussion of gender in the Atlantic slave trade and investigated how war influenced this trade. Drawing on the large database of 35,000 voyages, soon to be available on a website, he revealed that the slave trade reached its peak between 1785 and 1795, and that there were two slave trades, one in the North Atlantic and the other in the South Atlantic. While the wars brought a sharp, but temporary, halt to the northern trade, the southern trade continued relentlessly. Of importance to this conference, his team's data showed that during the Revolutionary era, increasing numbers of women and children were forced onto slave ships. Laurent Dubois followed with an investigation into the evolving relationship between gender, race, and citizenship in the French Caribbean with a comparison of Guadeloupe and Santo Domingo. He highlighted the intersection of race and gender to redefine new legal categories during a time of war and rebellion, including possibilities for women of color to petition for citizenship based on traditional republican virtues. He also addressed the emergence of a wartime economy and how it offered women new opportunities as they struggled to preserve their homes, rights, and families. Sherry Johnson explored the highly militarized society of Cuba to underscore that both gender and racial norms could be breached due to the demands of warfare and Cuba's vulnerability. The maintenance of codes of military conduct and honor were expected from both genders and all social strata, just as military benefits to widows and orphans were available to free women of color and white women alike. Johnson traced the passage of Cuban gender regimes from those of the eighteenth century and the wars, which offered greater fluidity and more active roles for women, to those of the nineteenth century, which infantilized free women and brutalized slave women, while developing an exclusionary discourse of race. A significant contrast with other areas was the heavy role of the state in the construction of gender and color regimes—for instance, through military benefits and the encouragement of marriage for soldiers and civil servants. These papers, the comment by Sarah Chambers, and the discussion emphasized the diversity of the many labor, racial, and gender regimes of the Caribbean, as well as differences in the impact of the wars. In particular, the proceedings highlighted the need to consider issues of race and slavery in any discussion of the period's evolving understandings of gender.

The second panel featured "National Masculinities and Femininities and Their Others," and began with a very interesting discussion of Revolutionary and Napoleonic visual culture by art historian David O'Brien. He traced a transformation in history painting that highlighted the male body and the performance of gendered identities on the canvas, as artists, often with difficulty and ambivalence, sought to redefine honor away from an aristocratic privilege toward one associated with merit, and fi-

nally, with Bonaparte and the Empire. Jane Rendall then explored the world of British women poets and their diverse renderings of war and empire. Though most British reviewers did not consider it appropriate for women to write about war, that criticism did not stop women from composing poetry focused on both the horrors and glories of warfare. Rendall explored the works of two poets, Anna Barbauld and Anne Grant, in order to underscore the diversity in women's war poetry as well as the politicization of war and empire in the public realm. Understood by the public as political commentary, these two poets asserted their rights to assess the moral and military state of Britain. Matthew Brown addressed the construction of national heroes during and after the Spanish Wars of Independence between 1810 and 1826. He argued that with masculinity under pressure during war, those who would be commemorated as heroes had to be killed at the right time, in the right way, and by the right person. He especially examined gendered notions of honor to emphasize that personal honor and morality were tied tightly to political ethos and operated within the commercial and literary networks of the Atlantic world. The discussion, spurred by comments by Anna Clark, focused on the many issues of representation that the papers had raised, especially the contested typologies of masculinity, and the ways in which the war reenergized the question of gender differences while making warfare and empire palatable to a broader public.

Linda Colley provided the conference's keynote lecture, entitled "Grand versus Francis: Gender, Imperial Warfare, and a Wider Atlantic World." Her lecture featured the notion of the "privilege of masculinity" absent a martial emphasis, as well as the self-fashioning opportunities for women in the "frontier community" of India. She analyzed the lawsuit between Philip Francis and George Francis Grand in late eighteenth-century British India to illustrate that the local environment initially could trump traditional notions of identity: gender, nationality, and religion. Grand sued Francis for "criminal conversation" with his sixteen-year-old French Catholic wife, Catherine Noëlle Verlee (Worlee), who had been born in the Danish colony of Tranquebar (Tarangambadi). The case showed that eighteenth-century India, with fewer, yet more visibly active women in a colonial community, which itself comprised many nationalities and religions, offered a more fluid environment than the British imperial rule of the nineteenth century. Ultimately, though, under the stress of war and intensifying British nationalism, unconventional female conduct, even on the frontier, presented too great a challenge to the emerging political order, indicating the increasingly close assignment of masculinity and politics.

The conference commenced the following day with the panel "Men at War: Masculinity and Soldiers' War Experiences." Alan Forrest explored

the relationship between masculinity and military qualities under the Revolution and Empire. Forrest highlighted the military's complex situation after 1792, as new notions of revolutionary honor, morality, and selflessness redefined both civil and martial conduct. Forrest illustrated that if the military recognized women soldiers, they praised their masculine qualities, rather than the women themselves. He concluded with a fascinating description of enduring conscription rituals, the *fêtes des conscrits*, as celebrations of masculinity. Stefan Dudink's paper on the relationship between masculinity, politics, and military careers continued the theme of military masculinity. Dudink drew an interesting comparison between two Dutch officers to illustrate different forms of masculinity within the military. His nuanced case study presented clear distinctions between one officer, Herman Willem Daendels, who was strongly committed to revolutionary reforms, and another, David Hendrikus Chassé, who instead championed apolitical loyalty and duty to the nation alone. Dudink pointed out that only one successfully survived after 1815 in the Netherlands: the officer who drew on politically neutral concepts of the citizen-soldier in service to the state rather than to a revolutionary ideology. Claudia Kraft likewise explored distinctive and evolving understandings of femininity and masculinity among the nobility in Poland, in particular a shift from an active military identity to an administrative bourgeois masculinity by 1815. At the same time, she traced the transformation of femininity among the Polish elites, which swung from the inclusion of noble women in military mobilization to their exclusion from later bureaucratic performances, rituals that emerged as the new qualifiers for civic engagement in a "manly self-government." Finally, Gregory Knouff explored the intersection between race and gender among poor white, free black, and Native American men in western Pennsylvania during the American Revolution. He argued that whiteness, masculinity, and military service replaced property ownership in defining citizenship in the young republic. Moreover, he asserted that such new distinctions of citizenship emerged on the frontiers in local militias; for example, in western Pennsylvania, white settlers (regardless of their cultural or ethnic background) felt it imperative to distinguish themselves from Native Americans, and thus viewed the War for Independence also as a race war. This panel, therefore, offered a variety of important insights into the various manifestations of military masculinities and the politicized transformation of men into soldiers. With his question, "What are armies for?" commentator Brian Holden Reid spurred a lively discussion about the significance of local and national contexts in any answer to such a question.

As a pendant to the previous panel, "Women at War: Female War Experiences" explored women's participation in war. Holly Mayer out-

lined the many areas of female activity in the American Revolution, from camp followers to national heroines such as Molly Pitcher. Despite women's participation in the insurrection against British rule, Meyer argued that American leaders immediately sought to turn these rough women into virtuous and self-sacrificing mothers and wives in order to generate their vision of a well-ordered society. Catriona Kennedy addressed British women's perception of warfare at the Battle of Waterloo, stressing that women experienced and recorded the war with more than one voice, and that they regarded themselves as "eye-witnesses" even though they were physically removed from the field of battle. Her work emphasized that viewing the wounded and dead as they came off the battlefield was very much a war experience, as was their fear of rape and pillage by a victorious enemy. Thomas Cardoza's presentation featured the vital roles of women in the French military as support personnel. He explored the continuities in, as well as significant transformations of, women's status as sutlers and laundresses in the armed services under four different regimes between 1780 and 1830. During the revolutionary and Napoleonic era, women were more aggressively constrained in their participation in combat as soldiers, in particular by the law of 30 April 1793, yet they gained legal status as holders of licenses (*patentes*) in the armed forces. He pointed out that many women—laundresses or sutlers—could end up in combat as their numbers grew alongside the escalating campaigns. Nevertheless, the state only recognized their participation in armed conflict as a purely defensive action, acknowledging them as such, and provided no pensions for their service or compensation for their injuries. These papers and the comments by D'Ann Campbell underscored that women did not have to be active on the field of combat to be participants in the war experience, and that, once again, the local context—religious, frontier, and national—did much to shape women's participation and how it was understood.

The final panel of the day, "Home Fronts: The War at Home," explored the consequences of war on domestic and civic life. Patricia Lin examined the transformation in British pension programs for the families of soldiers and sailors. She argued that the navy's new approaches to state support for widows and orphans broadened the state's responsibilities toward families, most interestingly by expanding the casualty payments and salary remittances to include interracial marriages and multi-racial children around the globe. Alexander Martin presented a case study of "civilian masculinity" in a time of war, that of Johann Ambrosius Rosenstrauch. He pointed out that the Napoleonic wars contributed to both the spiritual awakening and financial independence necessary for the self-fashioning of this alternative masculinity. Martin's case study identified a form of masculinity that was not martial, aristocratic, or

plebian, that crossed national and religious borders, and that appeared to contribute to the restrained and prudent bourgeois identity of the nineteenth century. Elizabeth Colwill shifted the discussion to the Caribbean and the intersection between the state and free women claiming a civic identity for themselves and their families. Colwill revealed the state's efforts to couple productivity and matrimony through laws that sacralized marriage and banned divorce while imposing a return to plantation labor. Whereas the Republic offered new protections and legal status by encouraging marriage and rewarding large (legitimate) families, as well as allowing the registration of children in the state's *état civil*, women's responses reveal their nuanced and determined resistance to the new system. Even as they hastened to register their legitimate and illegitimate children to solidify the ties of kinship and to claim "social being," they rejected both the labor codes and the state's idea that marriage alone formed the legitimate basis of family. The discussion, sparked by comments by Gisela Mettele, probed the models, whether generated by the state or broader culture, that underlay the gendering of identities.

The last day of the conference began with the panel "Gender, Nation, and Wars: Patriotic and Revolutionary Actions and Movements," which examined the intersection of gender and patriotism in times of war. Emma V. Macleod addressed the forms of patriotism available to British women during the revolutionary era and underscored the evidence of "independent patriotism" based on the correspondence of English blue-stockings. This "non-gendered and non-partisan engagement with the political affairs of the nation" represented women's political involvement despite limits on their sphere of action and proscribed conduct for patriotic sentiments. Similarly, Katherine Aaslestad traced the eighteenth-century origins of a gender-neutral civic patriotism in the republican city-state of Hamburg. She outlined the decline in this patriotism and the emergence of new militarized and gendered patriotic actions and rhetoric during the Wars of Liberation in 1813. Cecilia Morgan addressed the intersection between service to the crown, patriotic language, and performances of masculinity in Upper Canada during the War of 1812. Her paper probed the gendered language of patriotism to illustrate the marginalization of women as well as both sexes of Native Americans and Afro-Canadians, though Mohawk narratives asserted their own service to the crown and masculine courage. Finally, Karen Racine addressed the gendering of nation-building in Spanish America during the Wars of Independence. Her work emphasized the impact of European rhetoric, especially British models, in the family-based and gendered discourse of the era. The image of the father, the *padre*, as opposed to female allegories of "Liberty," especially, opened a means to reconceive the bonds of patriarchal authority as the revolutions progressed. She identified a shift

from a fraternal identity of “brothers-in-arms” during the 1810s to the “familial state” of the 1820s, united under the authority of the “founding fathers.” These papers demonstrated the diversity and dynamism of patriotic language and its potential for rapid transformation in times of war and national liberation. Mary Beth Norton challenged the participants by posing some broad themes that were emerging from the conference. Most important among these was the possibility that warfare allowed the consolidation of new trends, especially the creation of separate spheres and the linkage—very new—of women, the household, and “private” life.

The final panel of the conference, “Gendering War Memories,” addressed the shifting representations of masculinity and femininity in the gendering of the commemorations of these wars throughout the nineteenth century. Sarah Chambers explored the state’s process of constructing memory in Chile. She underscored how it used women, in particular widows, as tools of national reconciliation to highlight common services to the state, and presented women as gullible victims, not active resisters, in liberation movements. She revealed that once-exiled “founding fathers” were exhumed and brought back to Chile to heal the memories of suffering and internal divisions. Kathleen Duval used the story of Nicanora Ramos, wife of the Spanish commandant Cruzat, to explore the lives of forgotten women who were drawn into war against their will. Ramos was kidnapped by a Scottish trader in the dangerous Mississippi borderlands near Chickasaw Bluffs. Drawing on her captors’ notions of honor, Ramos not only negotiated housing for herself and her dependents in the leader’s quarters, but also used her position to secure information that she passed along to Spanish officials when she was released three weeks later. Like many of the women who fled invading armies or who followed soldier-husbands, Ramos coped as well as she could in a situation not of her own making. Turning our attention to the continent, Ruth Leiserowitz addressed gender images in literary representations of Russia’s 1812 Patriotic War. Leiserowitz explored fictional heroines from the middle of the nineteenth century who urged their soldier-fiancés to greater acts of sacrifice and heroism. While some renderings portrayed the young women as independent, patriotic, and courageous, with time, the representations reduced their roles to that of waiting anxiously and passively for news on a secure home front. Wolfgang Koller explored the gendered images of the War of Liberation in German feature films during the interwar years. Probing the male characters in key Ufa productions, especially those of Gerhard Lamprecht and Kurt Bernhardt, he highlighted the martial cult of the male hero and the ways in which images of femininity and masculinity revealed Weimar and Third Reich wish projections. The commentator, Judith Miller, raised the question of the impact of new genres—novels, films—coupled with new modes of rep-

resentation found in state documents such as family registers in consolidating and naturalizing the emerging gender regimes. This final panel concluded that the process of commemorating, remembering, and forgetting wars remains highly politicized and gendered, and that accounts of postwar trauma, victim narratives, and nostalgia converge in the politics of commemoration and memorialization.

The conference wrapped up with a final group of distinguished scholars to pull together the many issues raised by the variety of fascinating papers. This group consisted of Christopher Dandeker, Catherine Davies, Karen Hagemann, Lynn Hunt, and Alex Roland. The group emphasized the instability of gender praxis in the era of revolutions. Moreover, concepts of masculinity and femininity were not unitary phenomena. Instead, they were profoundly shaped by local conflicts and norms, and the models themselves moved rapidly across boundaries, only to be reconfigured in their new contexts. War and revolution placed further strains on those volatile models, raising the essential question about how to channel violence and restore order when old understandings and hierarchies have been swept away. If gender lines appeared to harden during the war, that development emerged from the instability of a new gender axis, where manhood was not a given, and instead had to be performed, repeated, and naturalized. The politicization of war and the growing sense of the citizen's "right" to comment on the moral and military state of affairs could not be monopolized by one sex, social group, or ethnicity, and this expansion of politics generated new efforts to reorder society. Historians have generally framed these processes within specific national boundaries, but this conference demonstrated that the dynamism of revolution, war, and liberation must be explored within a transnational structure that includes the very complex and rich concept of gender. The conference ended with an enormous debt of thanks to its principal organizer, Karen Hagemann, whose level of intellectual rigor and organizational energy made this highly productive and stimulating international conference possible, and to Laurence Hare, the conference assistant. The wonderful hospitality of the University of North Carolina was deeply appreciated by all participants, in particular the last night, featuring a local barbeque, Tommy Edward's Bluegrass Experience, and dancing at the Center for the Study of the American South.

*Katherine Aaslestad and Judith A. Miller*