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**BERTHA VON SUTTNER'S „DIE WAFFEN NIEDER“:  
A RHETORICAL ANALYSIS**

by  
**Kirsten W. Vuissa**

A thesis submitted to the faculty of  
**Brigham Young University**  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
**Masters of German Literature**

**Department of Germanic and Slavic Languages**  
**Brigham Young University**  
**April 2002**

## ABSTRACT

### BERTHA VON SUTTNER'S „DIE WAFFEN NIEDER“: A RHETORICAL ANALYSIS

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Masters of German Literature

Bertha von Suttner lived in fin-de-siècle Vienna. She wrote her romantic novel „Die Waffen nieder“ in 1889 and received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1905 for the novel's influence on the German peace movement. This thesis looks at the effect Suttner's gender had on the novel and its reception. As a woman writing about peace, Suttner was aware of the societal limitations placed upon her treatment of a political subject. Suttner carefully and consciously chose the novel's genre. Her synthesis of content and form epitomizes her pacifist and feminist cause. The protagonist's rhetorical language and the novel's genre compliment each other by using nineteenth century assumptions about women to persuade the reader to reevaluate their contemporary notions about war.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## Introduction

Bertha von Suttner's Die Waffen nieder (1889) was written in direct response to its historical and cultural narrative. In order to understand and value its anti-war message, we must read the novel in this context. I wish to argue that Suttner's personal position as a woman living in nineteenth century Austria gives her critique of war a unique voice and form of expression. Despite its controversial subject, the novel received an unexpected and unprecedented reception. The romantic novel was a very unlikely weapon against war. It was quickly criticized by many as an inappropriate genre to express political ideas, yet men and women alike praised Die Waffen nieder for its historical realism and persuasive power. This analysis will therefore look at the relationship between the novel's literary form and its anti-war content in the context of its general reception.

Die Waffen nieder=s non-offensive genre created a constructive channel for Suttner's critique and was soon acknowledged around the world as having legitimate and profound insight, an accomplishment for which she was the first woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize. Its engaging story made it so popular that it was soon translated into more than a dozen languages and filmed several times. The translator of a 1908 English edition of the book commented: "This work appears to me of especial value, as setting this forth more plainly than a formal treatise could do, and it is toward the formation of such a public opinion that we hope it may contribute."(Holmes vi)

After contemplating the remarkable accomplishments of the novel and its author, I became interested in the novel's unique contribution. Studying the historical and cultural context, I began to see how difficult it was to place Suttner and Die Waffen nieder in one neat category. Is the novel a representation of feminist, female or peace

literature? It became clear to me that Suttner must be acknowledged for synthesizing all three of these movements in one text. The novel is based on strong feminist assumptions, female literary traditions and pacifist ideology. The associations of these different movements force readers to take a closer look and question popular ideas.

Above all, the fact that Suttner was a woman writing about a very “unwomanly” subject made me wonder what role gender played in the novel. As a result, I will be looking at the text specifically from a gendered perspective. My approach is to examine Suttner’s arguments against war with gender always in mind. I wish to show how this theme permeates Suttner’s critique and how her understanding of gender’s role shapes the novel in form and content.

Although several critics have placed Suttner’s novel in its historical setting, the aspect of gender has yet to be explored. Gender, however, is not the only aspect of Suttner’s work that has been neglected. A thorough review of literature on the subject reveals that extensive interpretation of her writings has not been undertaken. Most sources are either purely historical or biographical. Harriet Anderson’s book Utopian Feminism: Women’s Movements in *fin-de-siecle* Vienna is a fine example of this. Her excellent analysis of the feminist movement in Vienna puts Suttner’s pacifist and feminist ties into perspective. Yet Anderson refers to Suttner’s participation only as a side note, as a woman whose accomplishments make her worth mentioning. Consequently, the book provides an important context for understanding the gender issues that played into the novel’s subject matter. Nevertheless, neither Die Waffen nieder nor Suttner’s life are subjects for closer analysis in Anderson’s work.

Equally valuable in providing historical background information is Ruth-Ellen Boetcher Joeres’ book, Respectability and Deviance: Nineteenth Century German Women Writers and the Ambiguity of Representation. As with Anderson’s exposition,

Boetcher Joeres focuses on one aspect of female history, in her case, female literary history. Although she does not mention Suttner, the information she gives on the difficulties women faced when writing was helpful in understanding the obstacles Suttner would have faced as a female novelist. These two books represent the types of literature I found when gathering my data. Despite the valuable resources my research uncovered that helped me reconstruct Suttner's personal circumstances surrounding her work on Die Waffen nieder, I was unable to find any literature that specifically placed Suttner in the complex context of nineteenth century female history. C. Grossmeier-Forsthuber's article „Bertha von Suttners Die Waffen Nieder: Die Geschichte einer Frau und ihres Romans“ attempts to do so, yet was lacking in its scope.

In addition to the historical commentaries I have discussed, I found many biographies about Suttner. As a recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, Suttner is a figure whose life has been well documented. One substantial collection is the 1993 Bertha von Suttner Exhibit put together by the United Nations Library at Geneva for the League of Nations. For this project, many scholars were asked to examine various aspects of her life, which were then compiled as a collection. None of these, however, takes a closer look at Die Waffen nieder or any other of her writings.

E. Reut-Nicolussi's book, Drei Österreichische Rufer zum Frieden: Bertha von Suttner, Alfred Fried, Professor Heinrich Lammasch, written in 1955 for the Austrian UNESCO-Commission, and Beatrix Kempf's, Bertha von Suttner: Das Lebensbild einer grossen Frau are other examples of biographies that offer general facts and make some interesting connections, but do not delve into a literary analysis of Suttner's writings.

As I have just explained, it was possible to find frequent mention of Suttner in relation to other feminists, female pacifists or female literary movements or to at least



infer the likely implications of such connections. Nevertheless, the only extensive interpretation of Suttner's literary work I found was Regina Braker's Weapons of Women Writers, in which Braker makes a compelling comparison of Die Waffen nieder and Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin. A comprehensive commentary, Braker's book concentrates on the historical and literary similarities between the two novels. Although I make similar historical connections in my analysis, I will focus primarily on the discourse that spawned her thought, and on her transformation of popular ideology into a gendered critique of Austria's war system. Suttner's novel, Die Waffen nieder, as well as her other publications, still offer much ground for inquiry and interpretation.

In my analysis, I wish to connect the "cultural conversation" that prompted Suttner to write, and show how these forces shaped the novel's form and content. I believe that the novel's cultural and historical context will elucidate Suttner's ideological beliefs as well as her understanding and awareness of her audience. This assumption is based on the theories of rhetorical critics such as Steven Mailloux and M.M. Bakhtin, who reject foundationalist literary theories that promise objective interpretive results. Instead, as they propose, a reading (and writing) is an individual process dependent on time and space. Despite their differences, both critics reject the foundationalist idea that texts can be interpreted objectively. The notion that universal principles exist that can be applied to a text to get the "right" interpretation stands in direct conflict with the rhetorical approach Mailloux and Bakhtin defend. They agree that every interpretive act relies on a specific narrative and must be connected to its historical hermeneutics. My utilization of this method will show the ways in which Die Waffen nieder rhetorically deals with a combination of ideologies and cultural currents. Bakhtin refers to this idea as "open unity." He explains, "In each culture of the past lie

immense semantic possibilities that have remained undisclosed, unrecognized, and unutilized throughout the entire historical life of given culture” (6). Reading Suttner’s novel with this concept in mind lends new dimensions to her implicit concept of gender, while reminding one of the subjective nature of interpretation.

Bahktin’s question, “How can we communicate ethically with one another?” is equally important. And as I wish to show, Suttner’s bold stance against war attempts to answer this question. The fact that Die Waffen nieder embodies this question makes a rhetorical analysis of the text unavoidable. Bahktin’s question as to **how** we communicate directly relates to **how** a text is written, or in other words, its style and form. This question presupposes that a text is rhetorical. In his book Analyzing Prose, Richard Lanham defines rhetoric as, “everything in a message which aims not to deliver neutral information but to stimulate action” (20). He makes a strong argument that students should be taught to look not only through a text, but also **at** it. This form of analysis highlights the importance of an idea’s presentation and not just the idea itself because as Lanham puts it “Prose style models human motives” (21). Lanham colorfully illustrates in his book how the rhetorical elements and structures of a text clearly reveal its motives. Only after motives are made apparent can one decide whether the presentation of ideas is consistent with the ideas themselves. Although such an approach studies the response the text intends to achieve, the emphasis remains on the text and not on the reader. This focus does not disregard the reader’s part in the process of interpretation, but instead of subjectively judging the reader’s response, it ascertains the text’s ability to effectively achieve its goals. Rhetorical criticism, therefore, as applied in this analysis will provide the necessary historical background to contextualize the novel and its critique. Additionally, a thorough study of textual structures will illuminate moral intentions and their effectiveness. As this thesis will

show, Die Waffen nieder was successful in reaching its objectives because form and content are concordant.

Suttner explicitly outlined in her own memoirs her objectives for the novel. Suttner wrote Die Waffen nieder as a means to familiarize the public with the ideals of the peace movement. Her explicit intent was to persuade and educate her readers. This purpose, in conjunction with her choice of genre, makes the text an important subject for rhetorical analysis. That is to say, the novel as a persuasive text can be read much like a speech or oratory. While the historical background I that provide will place the novel in its appropriate cultural context, exposing stylistic means will show that the literary patterns are consistent and support the protagonist's arguments. This in turn will reveal the protagonist's ethos or character by examining her thought-patterns, motives and emotions as found in the delivery of her experiences. In my analysis, I argue from the standpoint that Suttner does not distance herself from Martha, the novel's protagonist. In this way, Suttner's convictions are synonymous with Martha's; their opinions are indistinguishable. A memoir, Die Waffen nieder is not a spontaneous account of events but rather a premeditated representation of past events. It will be my task to show how the protagonist's language mirrors the novel's overall theme.

After a brief biography of Suttner, I proceed to explore in particular how contemporary military attitudes, literary traditions, feminist ideas and the notion of essentialism all shaped the novel. In this context, it will become clear how the novel's genre, which was generally considered an inferior literary form incapable of intellectual depth, illustrates the novel's perception of the roles women play in war. Written in the tradition of female-authored fictional memoirs, the novel has a clear political agenda. The romantic elements in the novel equally serve a didactic purpose, which make its genre a functional medium.

Since many readers are not familiar with this novel, I now include a short summary. The novel's pacifist tenets come alive as the protagonist, Martha Althaus Dotsky von Tilling relates the experiences that lead her to pacifism. Martha retells her life-story in seven historical episodes that trace her *Bildung* as she documents Austria's participation in the four European wars between 1859 and 1871<sup>1</sup>. War and its repercussions scar Martha's life, making her twice a widow and demanding the lives of most of her immediate family. Her life testifies of war's personal and public destruction. Her first husband falls in the battle of Magenta in 1859, barely a year after their wedding; her second is killed by a nationalist mob, only days before the final armistice. In fulfillment of a promise to her second husband, Martha pens her memoirs as a petition for peace after his death. The passages from Martha's journals read more like historical eyewitness accounts of Austria's on-going militarization and its repetitive wars than a fictional narrative.

Based on my analysis of the novel, I conclude that the novel's popularity and political recognition are established by the subversive manner through which it exploits the emotional power of romance novel and memoir genres. Equally, the protagonist's "right" as a woman to be emotional allows the reader to be less critical of her experience and more open to her perspective.

Although Martha's life does not change the course of history, and Suttner did not prevent World War I, the novel's widespread acclaim introduced the idea of war's problematic origin to a large international audience. The novel left its mark on the cultural conversation of its time and still offers insight into the gender politics of war. As Mailloux explained in the preface to his book, Rhetorical Power "various discourses – literary, critical and theoretical – function in producing the specific historical effects

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<sup>1</sup> The Austrian wars: 1859 (with Italy and France), 1864 (with Denmark), 1866 (with Prussia), and

they do” (xxi). As this analysis sets out to show, Suttner’s bold attempt to fuse literary genres, critical thought and theoretical philosophies, proved to be a success. The gendered genre that Suttner chose for her ideas illustrates the political power of women. In this way, form and content accentuate and uphold one another. Die Waffen nieder offers an insightful gendered perspective on war that still has meaning today.

## I. Historical Context

### Biography

Peace scholars agree that Bertha von Suttner (1843-1914) must be recognized as the mother of the German peace movement. Born to noble parents, Suttner received an extensive education in music and languages. After her father’s inheritance was exhausted, she was forced to earn a living as a governess for the family of Baron von Suttner. In 1876, Suttner worked briefly for Alfred Nobel as his personal secretary in Vienna, Austria. This experience founded a lasting friendship that later influenced Nobel’s decision to institute the Nobel Peace Prize. That same year, Suttner and the youngest son of the von Suttner family were married against the will of his family. Spurned by the family, they went to the Caucasus to start a new life together, both working as writers and teachers. In 1885 they returned to Austria. Soon after their return, Suttner was introduced to the Peace Movement on a trip to Paris. She was so impressed by the message conveyed there, that she wrote *Die Waffen nieder*, with the intent of somehow contributing to the cause. After the novel’s unexpected world success, Suttner became actively involved in the Peace Movement. In 1893 she co-founded and served as president of the *Wiener Friedensgesellschaft*. She also acted as the vice-president of the international *Friedensbüro* in Bern, Switzerland. From 1892-

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finally the German – French War in 1870-1871

1899 Suttner published the magazine “Die Waffen nieder” and also initiated the establishment of the *Deutsche Friedensgesellschaft*. In 1905, she finally became the recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize which she helped to establish. Ironically, she died in 1914, two weeks before WW I began.

### **The military attitude of the time**

Suttner wrote *Die Waffen nieder* during the 1880s, at a time when the climate in Austria and Europe was approaching a militaristic peak. The Balkan conflict was straining relations between the Austro-Hungarian empire and Russia, and the anti-German sentiment in France was rising. In the early part of the eighteenth century, a military caste system officially replaced the tradition of hired militias and mercenaries. Aristocracy began to have access to their own standing armies, which were often financed by the state and acknowledged as integral parts of the state. Up to this point, the military was still an aristocratic apparatus that had little interaction with the general population. During the second half of the 19th century, Europe in general was experiencing a militaristic and nationalistic resurgence. The French Revolution in the previous century had already initiated a new relationship between the citizen and the state. The surge of nationalism and democratization transformed war’s meaning for the individual. No longer an affair between warring gentry, war became a matter of honor and duty to one’s fatherland, subsequently elevating the social status of the soldier. Such attitudes introduced the military system as we know it today and created a new military subculture that distinguished itself from civilian life: „abgehoben von der Rest der Gesellschaft nicht nur durch ihre Funktion, sondern auch durch Lebens- und Umgangsform, Uniform, Weltanschauung, durch genau definierte interpersonelle Beziehungen, durch Gruppenprivilegien und durch die Verantwortlichkeiten, die ihr

durch die Aufgabe zugewiesen waren.“ (qtd. in Schenk 77) As a result, the military established its own hierarchy, reserving prestige and promotion for only certain social classes. War was now regarded as a matter of honor and a means to promote careers. For officers, death posed a risk that paled in comparison to promised recognition. The initiation of mandatory military service for men as part of this development played a significant role in militarizing Austrian society.

Relatively few people opposed this rise in nationalist and militarist sentiments. Those who spoke out against waging war were perceived as radicals or pseudo-intellectuals whose writings and efforts were scarcely noticed or who were simply ignored by the general public. Military propaganda ubiquitously glorified and romanticized war in history and schoolbooks, hence cultivating the view that war was a fact of life, an unavoidable „evil.“ Cynthia Enloe examines in her book Maneuvers how militarization subtly and pervasively transforms the relationship between people, objects and opinions. According to her, militarization is:

a step-by-step process by which a person or a thing gradually comes to be controlled by the military or comes to depend for its well-being on militaristic ideas. The more militarization transforms an individual or a society, the more that individual or society comes to imagine the military needs and military presumptions to be not only valuable but also normal. Militarization, that is, involves cultural as well as institutional, ideological, and economic transformations. (3)

The idea of militarization can be ascribed different values. For some the process is necessary and serves the public good: stable jobs are created, national security is

guaranteed and economic growth is accelerated. Lucinda Peach argues that for just-war theorists, the military is a justified institution when war satisfies just-war criteria (156). Writers such as Enloe and Suttner view militarization from a different perspective. They are skeptical of military motives and question the realist premise that human nature makes war inevitable and unavoidable. For them, militarization artificially sustains violence as a solution for conflict and offers no hope for peace. „Nicht den Frieden zu erhalten, sondern ihn erst zu schaffen, gilt's, denn wir haben keinen. Wir leben im Rüstungskrieg, in einem auf die Dauer unhaltbaren Waffenstillstand“ (Suttner 1896). Jean Bethke Elshtain similarly criticizes the posture that dichotomizes war and peace in order to give the impression that peace is merely the absence of war, rather than a „chastened patriotism“ that would restrain thinking in „warist “ terms ( qtd in Peach 161).

Additionally, militarization reinterprets gender relations by answering the question as to how people should relate to one another. Human relations are strongly influenced by our concept of gender. For example, my perception of my environment and my place in it is almost entirely dictated by my perception of my being a woman. Whether one believes that gender is a cultural construction or an eternal attribute, the fact remains that gender matters, and this makes it a powerful resource that can be manipulated and exploited for multiple purposes. In a militarized society, masculinity and femininity are defined by their relation to a nationalist military system. Enloe analyzes how this process relies on specific gender relations to sustain itself:

Male military policy makers -- uniform and civilian -- have believed that they need to control women in order to achieve military goals. In scores of different societies, they have acted as though men are not natural



soldiers, as though most men need to be continually reminded that their tenuous grasp on the status of „manly man“ depends on women (Maneuvers 37).

Men and women must play complementary roles for a military system to function. Men must be willing to fight to protect their women and women must be willing to send their men off to fight for their country. Enloe questions the militarized use of gender roles in her book, The Morning After: Sexual Politics at the End of the Cold War. She raises several key questions that equally apply to Suttner's analysis of Austria. She asks:

When a community's politicized sense of its own identity becomes threaded through with pressures for its men to take up arms, for its women to loyally support brothers, husbands, sons and lovers to become soldiers, it needs explaining. How were the pressures mounted? What does militarization mean for women's and men's relationships to each other? What happens when some women resist those pressures? (250)

Militarization heavily rests on the foundation of gender. In a workshop given at the International Women's University, Cynthia Cockburn addressed the distinction made between male and female roles during wartime. As she pointed out, during a crisis, national discourse must unify its people and bridge internal divisions for the sake of national interest. Diversity among women within any given country must somehow be overcome. Constructing an ideal of nationhood that involves reproductive and familial imagery creates a myth of homogeneity, i.e the language of nation is all about

birth (birth of the nation, birth for the nation), and blood line (purity of descent, land where our grandfathers' bones are buried), and sons (brave sons, sacrificed sons). This type of nationalist ideology generates specific and contradictory renderings of manhood and womanhood. Cockburn added to this idea:

The agency of men is stressed, particularly their ability and willingness to fight bravely. What is stressed in women is their nurturing and gentle natures, their domestic skills and fortitude. This woman is important but she is not autonomous -- her value resides in her secondary positioning and support role within the patriarchal family. In preparation for national wars, men are prepared to sacrifice their lives, women their sons' lives.  
(2000)

Men and women are an important item on the list of dichotomies such as „war and peace,“ „good and bad,“ „us and them.“ By making clear distinctions between the two, policy makers are able to create the illusion that there are no alternatives for making peace. Each individual must assume their assigned roles in the war system.

Enloe has shown that cultural mores complement structural conditions: militaries need men and women to behave in gender-stereotyped ways. Women must behave in a maternal fashion and must need men to protect them. Men in turn should feel that in order to prove their masculinity they must fight and support their nation as it goes to war. This is usually interpreted as taking on exceptionally masculine behaviors and attitudes through military training. The complementary argument suggests that in order for societies to be patriarchal or male-dominated, military values must predominate -- masculine values must be privileged over feminine values; masculine

values become equated with military values. This sexualization of the human wartime experience and its values reveals itself in various cultural forms. Militarized rhetoric in popular culture for example encourages militarism that in turn relies on gendered social relations

In a workshop examining the intersection between gender and war, Cockburn posed the question: „If we use a feminist gender analysis to look at moments in the cycle of peace and war, what does it show us that we might not otherwise see?“ As she discussed in her lecture, there is a *relation* in sex-distributions. „One sex-distribution is related to another -- for instance the sexual division of labour in the home is related to the sexual division of labour in the economy. But also, what men do and are is related to what women do and are, their positioning often being *complementary* -- and the complementarity is almost always *asymmetrical*: one part has more weight than the other“ (2000). Enloe remarks along these lines:

The militarization of women has been crucial for the militarization of governments and international relations. The militarization of women has been necessary for the militarization of men. And because the militarization of women takes such humdrum forms, because it tends to insinuate itself into ordinary daily routines where it is rarely heralded or even deemed noteworthy, investigating the militarization of women can sharpen our sometimes dulled analytical skills. (3)

Feminism has taken upon itself the task of questioning traditional gender roles. Neither men nor women have proven to be inherently violent or peaceful; instead, humans have shown the capacity to be both. The fact that states produce so much propaganda to

construct male and female identities suggests that the concept of masculinity and femininity can be manipulated to accommodate political interests. A group of internationally renowned scientists concluded in the *Seville Statement on Violence* that humans are not inherently violent, and therefore social and political factors are more likely to contribute to war and its gendered nature. (qtd in Turpin 13)

One can conclude then that women, as well as men, make equally important contributions to war making. However, although men have previously and still continue to dominate the political arena and the profits of war, women have power to influence peace, since they still continue to dominate the private sector, meaning the upbringing of the next generation. **Problematic is that men as well as women have devalued this role.**

### **Literary background**

A critical prerequisite when looking at the position of nineteenth century women writers is an understanding of the securely established nature of gender polarization. Beginning primarily with Sophie LaRoche in the mid-1700s and Eugenie Marlitt one hundred years later, female-authored literature in general faced societal opposition. Yet, regardless of its obstacles, by the beginning of the 19th century, it became obvious that women would continue to write. During the late 1800s, the most acceptable genre for female writers was the *Gesellschaftsroman*. Suttner used this genre to familiarize a wide readership with her political ideals, capitalizing on her understanding of the elements a fictional autobiography must have to appeal to a broader audience. Although feminism had didactic reasons for producing emotionally engaging texts, it remained a fact that women were also limited to this genre. Any female-authored text that attempted to achieve intellectual rather than sentimental

acknowledgement was quickly dismissed. Attempts to scientifically prove the concept of female intellectual inferiority became popular. Women's ostensible rational feebleness was based on the assumption that they had smaller brains. In reaction to women's persistence in writing, those opposed changed their tactics from "condemnation to condescension" (Kontje 7). Among these were Johann von Goethe and Friedrich Schiller, who agreed that women's literature could only be mediocre, as exemplified in Schiller's remarks to Goethe regarding the eighteenth century author and poet Sophie Mereau Bretano: "Ich muss mich doch wirklich drüber wundern, wie unsere Weiber jetzt, auf bloss dilettantischem Wege, eine gewisse Schreibgeschicklichkeit sich zu verschaffen wissen, die der Kunst nahe kommt" (Schiller 93).

The women who wrote during the nineteenth century clearly acted against their assigned roles. By presenting themselves publicly through their writing and publishing their work, their behavior contradicted the modest and submissive ideal of womanhood (Boetcher Joeres, 4). The form of autobiography, for example, although far from a political treatise, contradicts the ideal of passive femininity. More than letters, autobiographies are explicitly self-assertive and self-representational. The entrenched idea that women belonged solely in the private domain made it difficult for women to publically challenge this belief without being perceived as deviant and immodest. This automatically made women who wrote radicals. For the most part, they became rebels without wanting to be and as a result, found themselves living a paradox and struggling to find a balance between conflicting identities.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning describes this phenomenon in her letters written during the Crimean War (1854-1856). She mocks the conventions that placed rigid confines on women's political participation. In the war context, she resists stereotypes

of the woman as saintly nurse as a: „revival of old virtues! Since the siege of Troy and earlier, we have had princesses binding wounds with their hands...Every man is on his knees before ladies carrying lint, calling them ‚angelic she’s,‘ whereas, if they stir an inch as thinkers or artists from the beaten line...the very same men would curse the impudence of the very same women“ (qtd in Cooper 15). Browning recognizes that women’s exclusion from intellectual activities is a paradox that has existed for centuries.

Suttner encountered similar obstacles when expressing her political convictions and critique of the status quo in writing her political treatise Das Maschinenalter. Die Waffen nieder directly responds to these limitations. While the novel’s genre and Martha’s character generally conform to female stereotypes, the reader is led to conclude that many assumptions presupposed at the onset of the novel no longer hold by the end of the story.

### **Feminist background**

During the nineteenth century, the Hapsburg Empire was in a time of transition, not only politically but also socially. Germany’s 1848 revolution became an important milestone for women, since it initiated women’s growing presence in the public sphere. Technological breakthroughs such as the *Schnellpresse*, invented in 1811, altered women’s lives by making books more affordable to read and to write. The formalization of a woman’s movement in 1865 was introduced by the publication of articles and essays authored by women. Newly established politically tinged periodicals sought a heightened awareness of gendered issues.

In her book, Respectability and Deviance, Ruth-Ellen Boetcher Joeres distinguishes between the different perspectives of proletarian and bourgeois women.

Where proletarian women desired to take part in the overall class struggle and stressed better employment as a class issue, bourgeois women focused more on gender issues, such as improving education opportunities for girls and women.

Despite the split between proletarian and bourgeois feminist interests, both groups generated theory to back up their activist work. Feminist literature played a critical role in campaigning for support. Feminist literary theorists, such as Rosa Mayreder, believed literature's mission was to depict reality. Like many early feminists, she believed that realism, in conjunction with idealism and morality, was the true recipe for great didactic literature. Most feminists agreed, however, that although literature was obligated to these ideals, it must remain art and not become propaganda. As a result, feminists built upon literary traditions forged by the previous generations of female authors. This made autobiographical forms --diaries, letters and memoirs-- popular frameworks for imaginative texts, e.g. Suttner's Die Waffen nieder. (Anderson 212) These literary forms established by early women authors were conducive to the emotional emphasis feminists placed in their writings. Love and poverty were the most popular topics addressed by feminist authors throughout the 1800s, since they not only provoked empathy and compassion in the reader but also were acceptable topics for women's literature. Harriet Anderson clarifies the relationship feminists had to literature in her book Utopian Feminism: "Literature was an integral part of a changed intellectual perception. For these women there were no rigid barriers between imaginative and analytical writing, as is indicated by the literary quotations and devices found in their theoretical texts" (207). Interestingly enough, although feminist ideas radically revolted against social norms, feminist writers still struggled to adhere to literary norms. This paradox shows the difficulty even the most devout feminists had to break out of imposed molds and actualize their goals for improved gender relations.

Suttner equally faced this dilemma. Her use of the romantic novel's genre and its inherent capabilities, however, undercuts the restrictive limitations dictated to her as a woman. Instead, the genre serves Suttner's purposes like no other literary form could.

Suttner lived in fin-de-siècle Vienna and was aware of and informed about the cultural developments around her. Her husband, Arthur Gundaccar von Suttner was a member of the first committee of Austria's Ethical Society, along with many influential feminists of the time, such as Rosa Mayreder and Marianne Hainisch. Bertha von Suttner was personally acquainted with these and other leading feminist figures, as well as with their ideas. Although Suttner primarily focused her energies on furthering pacifist ideals, she was heavily influenced and inspired by the feminist theory generated by her contemporaries. Suttner was one of the first women to focus on peace as a gendered issue. She believed, like many other feminist thinkers, that the women's movement must be rationally sound in order to initiate change (Anderson 112). Although Suttner's humanitarian *Austrian Peace Society* was not directly affiliated with any particular party or feminist organization, Vienna's various women's groups recognized Suttner's incorporation of feminist thought and acknowledged her contribution to the women's movement.

Suttner was very aware of the multitude of issues the growing feminist organizations were devoted to. After being invited to become a spokesperson for the feminist cause, Suttner explained to Hainisch her reasons for not actively supporting the causes espoused by the feminist movement. „It is not prudery, which stops me from joining the struggle against VD, but because it is just as important as a dozen other things: mother protection, marriage reform, anti-alcoholism, tuberculosis etc. etc. No, I cannot manage all that” (Anderson 111). Instead, Suttner felt called to direct her energies toward the peace movement. She saw the feminist movement as a means to a



much greater end, a necessity for promoting peace. Unlike many feminists, Suttner was convinced that only the involvement of both sexes in the peace making process could make war obsolete.

### **Essentialism**

Although she was influenced by feminist theory, Suttner, did not believe that women were more inclined than men to support the pacifist cause. In this sense, she took a humanistic approach that was careful not to characterize women as the sole defenders of peace. Consequently, the novel presupposes woman's equal part in sustaining war. Although women were not recognized as political entities, Martha's experiences show that they become political by mere nature of their gender. The role women play in making war illustrates how they can and should be involved in working for peace.

Suttner did not agree that women instinctively abhorred war: "Modern women do not shake at the institution of war because they are daughters, wives and mothers, but because they [women] have become the rational half of a humanity which is becoming more rational and see that war represents an obstacle to cultural development" (Die Mütter 704). Suttner saw education and refined morality as prerequisites for understanding war's destructive consequences. According to Suttner, as half of the human population, women were to join the peace movement as representatives of a higher level of evolution that was characterized by the rule of reason.

Suttner believed that peace was the result of educating humanity, individually and collectively. This educational process, as exemplified in Die Waffen nieder, exposes gender's manipulation for militaristic purposes, for example, women's

exclusion from politics, and the polarization of gender roles. Suttner models in her novel how pacifism, as a human cause, can only be attained when the efforts of both men and women are enlisted. As Suttner demonstrated, precisely pacifism's goal of realizing peace for *all* people requires a balanced relationship between the sexes. Since Suttner clearly rejected the essentialization of women as inherent peacemakers and peacekeepers, her analysis and illustration of the implications of militarization initiates a new perspective on women's roles in the war system. Her position in the novel offers a gendered discourse on war that adds new facets to previously constructed feminine identity and supercedes essentialistic feminism, a contribution that radically acknowledges women's agency and power. While she does not undermine the importance of mothering, Suttner ingeniously unveils its political and military value.

Women are not natural peacemakers. For Suttner, feminine pacifism is neither inherent nor purely based on motherhood, but rather based on intellect and compassion--a combination needed by both men and women.

### **Suttner's choice of the romantic novel as an expression of her understanding of gender equality**

During her isolated years in the Caucasus, Suttner became familiar with the writings of thinkers such as Charles Darwin, Herbert Spencer and H. Thomas Buckle. Impressed by their new theories of evolution and the development of society, Suttner began to integrate their ideas into her writings. Despite financial and social pressures to write marketable love stories for a living, Suttner wanted to address weightier social matters. A year before the publication of Die Waffen nieder and her introduction to the peace movement, Suttner published a collection of commentaries called Das Maschinenalter: Zukunftsvorlesungen über unsere Zeit. In this book, Suttner attempted to address an

array of social issues in a very straightforward manner. Speaking in an authoritative manner about topics such as women's rights, industrialization and militarization, however, was unthinkable for a woman. As a result, Suttner encountered limitations placed upon her work that compelled her to publish the book using the pseudonym *Jemand*. She wrote:

Wenn ich diesmal anonym vor das Publikum trete, so geschieht es, weil mein Name, wenn genannt, gerade solche Kreise meinem Buche verschliessen könnte, für die es hauptsächlich bestimmt ist. – Jemand (Memoiren 169).

Suttner recognized that her political commentary would find little if any serious consideration among her peers, if it bore **her** name. Once the book was published it was the topic of much discussion. Many speculated about its authorship. The thought that the author might be woman never occurred to anyone. In Das Maschinenalter, she poignantly quoted from Eduard Reich's book Studien über Frauen to illustrate the prejudice women were exposed to:

Alle Gelehrsamkeit ist beim Weibe nur Schein. Mit dem Bisherigen soll durchaus nicht behauptet sein, die Frauen wären unfähig zur leichter Schriftstellerei, zur Novellen-und Romanschreiberei, zu den leichten Arten der Dichtkunst und andern Operationen des Geistes; im Gegenteil kann eben wegen ihrer Fähigkeit, Lappalien auf das Genaueste wahrzunehmen und das Äussere der Erscheinungen auf das Minitöseste

zu beurteilen, die Frau in leichter Schreiberei oft sehr Bedeutendes zu Tage fördern. (90)

Reich's statement represents the popular attitude towards female thought and explains Suttner's decision to publish under a pseudonym. Unable to ignore existing female-authored literature, Reich generally characterized it as intellectually inferior. Reich concedes that women are capable of precise observation, yet explicitly denies them the ability to make rational conclusions based on their observations. Although Das Maschinenalter and many other examples of serious texts written by women disproved Reich's premise, Suttner knew that her comments would only find ears if they did not come from of **her** mouth. Reich's comments reflect the discourse that had Vienna's intellectual circles humming with talk and speculations about women's role in society. The most common reaction to feminist ideas was to sexualize them and dismiss them as abnormal. Advocates of feminism were seen as hermaphrodites or sexually disoriented persons. The theory of penis envy propounded by Suttner's contemporary, Sigmund Freud, even claimed an immediate connection between feminism and lesbianism. In 1903, the same year Freud's book\* was published, Otto Weininger attempted to scientifically explicate the feminist movement in his popular book, Geschlecht und Charakter. According to him, the women's movement was a phenomenon exclusively introduced by *Mannweiber*, women who were alienated from their true femininity (qtd in Anderson 4). Such women, he declared, were masculine in their appearance and their intellectual abilities and therefore represented only a small and unnatural minority.

Such views directly affected Suttner's life; the idea of „*Mannweib*“ was not new to her. On the cover page of Leopold Katscher's biography of Bertha von Suttner

(1903) he quoted a Dr. Ellbogen who said of her: „Dieses Weib ist ein ganzer Mann.“ This introductory quote seems to set a tone in the biography that justifies Suttner’s accomplishments as a freak of nature. As Suttner’s contemporary, it is unlikely that Katscher was unaware of the laden meaning of his assertion.

An apparent supporter of Suttner, Katscher knew that criticism of Suttner’s novel often related to her gender and was therefore eager to defend Suttner’s success:

Viele bedeutende Männer freisinniger oder ethischer Richtung—darunter Bodenstedt, Büchner, Carneri, Rosegger, Groller, F. Gross, H. Hart, M.G. Conrad—äusserten sich in begeisterter Weise, während die Rückständigen und die Chauvinisten das Buch und die Baronin arg zerzausten. Das Lob überwog weitaus den Tadel und Spott. (41)

This comment, despite its positive affirmation, reveals the ingrained discrimination Suttner encountered as a woman speaking up against the societal status quo. Unable to vote or participate in politics, Suttner surmounted these disadvantages, this time by writing a romantic novel instead of a political commentary. Only a year after publishing Das Maschinenalter, Suttner took a new approach when she published Die Waffen nieder. After receiving anonymous recognition for her style and ideas, she wanted to speak in her own voice. Doing so, however, would eliminate the possibility for her to speak with authority. In choosing a *Gesellschaftsroman*, she felt no need to use a pseudonym, despite the novel’s political and social critique, since its genre offered an acceptable means to disseminate her ideas. Die Waffen nieder hence displays Suttner’s conscious use of the limited literary and political resources assigned to her gender. A romance novel was the only acceptable form through which a woman

could express herself. It seems that the form was more important than the content. Based on its appropriate genre, the novel was able to circumvent prejudice long enough to be read. In this way, the novel's "disguise" allowed Suttner to get her foot in the door and have her voice be heard despite her being "only" a woman. This approach proved itself to be very successful as the international response to the novel confirms.

After reading the book, Alfred Nobel wrote Suttner:

Sie haben jedoch unrecht, ADie Waffen nieder≅ zu rufen, da Sie selbst von ihnen Gebrauch machen und da die Ihren -- der Zauber Ihres Stils und die Grösse Ihrer Ideen -- sehr viel weitertragen und noch tragen werden als Lebel-Gewehre, Nordenfelt-Kanonen, Bange-Geschütze und all die anderen Werkzeuge der Hölle (Lebenserinnerungen 219).

Katscher's biography praises Suttner's accomplishments for dealing with the subject of war on a superior level:

Die in sozialer, kultureller, menschlicher und politischer Hinsicht äusserst wichtigen Stoffe, die dieser Roman behandelt—Krieg, Friede, Abrüstung, Völkerschiedshöfe—sind schon von vielen Schriftstellern zum Gegenstand von Büchern gemacht worden, aber in der Literatur keines Volkes und keiner Sprache haben sie eine so umfassende und erschöpfende, dabei so ausgezeichnete und anziehende Darstellung erfahren, wie hier (42).

E. Reut-Nicolussi explained in his biography, written in 1955 for the Austrian UNESCO-Commission, that Suttner possessed a strong intellect besides her powerful conviction of peace and disdain for violence. He explains:

Aber neben diesen Regungen wirkte in ihr auch ein durchdringender Verstand, der sie zwang, ihre Ziele auch aus sozialen Ursachen und Zusammenhängen zu begreifen und zu rechtfertigen. So wurde sie vor einseitiger Gefühlsduselei bewahrt und vermochte mit sachlichen Argumenten und wissenschaftlichen Methoden auch Kreise zu überzeugen, deren Nüchternheit Gefühlsregungen unzugänglich waren (131).

Like Reut-Nicolussi, many politicians and major thinkers correctly recognized Suttner's well-founded arguments and reasons for peace. Nevertheless, much like the quote: „Dieses Weib ist ein ganzer Mann,“ Reut-Nicolussi's remark subtly implies that qualities such as logic, objectivity and impartiality are inherently male. Although the expression, „so wurde sie vor einseitiger Gefühlsduselei bewahrt“ is meant as a compliment, it plays upon popular feminine stereotypes, as if to say Suttner was lucky to escape the trap of emotional, irrational and subjective “feminine” thinking. This perception conveniently ignores the plethora of sentimental male-authored texts from the Romantic period.

Censure focusing on Suttner's gender made it easy to reject her social critique as irrational ranting from a feminine perspective. As Suttner quoted in her book, Lebenserrinerungen, anonymous contemporaries made comments such as the following: “Die Autorin mag doch zu ihren Novellen zurückkehren, bei welchen sie ein

ganz nettes Talent entfaltet,” and again “Was die gute alte Dame von ihren Schicksalen erzählt, ist ja recht traurig, aber die daraus gezogenen Folgerungen können dem ernstesten Politiker nur ein Lächeln abgewinnen“ (Suttner, Lebenserrinerungen 220) Comments such as these reflect the patronizing postures toward her work. These remarks are fine examples of the prevalent reservations that thrived concerning women’s intellectual capabilities. J. M. Ritchie, another of Suttner’s contemporaries, referred to Die Waffen Nieder as:

rather long and [having] many weaknesses, among them the structural flaw that it was written from the point of view of an aristocratic wife and mother who could hardly be considered capable of understanding the true causes of war. (2)

The opinion that the heroine’s gender constitutes a „structural flaw“ testifies of the bias against women’s abilities to comprehend their environment. The critic’s tone attempts to make the notion that a wife and mother could possibly offer insight into a political issue, such as war, seem utterly absurd.

Fault was readily found with Suttner’s literary abilities. Such critique disregards the didactic and functional character of the text. In order to appreciate the novel’s contribution and value it must be read while taking into consideration its cultural context and intended function. It is helpful to recognize the moralizing nature of the text. A position that is exclusively based on traditional Western aesthetics tends to exclude many female-authored texts from the literary canon. It is misleading to dismiss the text’s literary quality as mediocre simply because it may not conform to this arbitrary set of standards. It is therefore necessary to look at Suttner’s novel within the



context in which it was written. As will be demonstrated in this thesis, her treatment of war from a gendered perspective displays a skilled use of the literary and feminist goals she subscribed to.

The form of didactic literature was Suttner's compromise between art and activism, influenced as well by her dire financial situation. Much like many of her feminist contemporaries, Suttner saw herself caught somewhere between aesthetics and education, a position that makes it difficult to place her work in one specific category. On the one hand, Suttner wanted to do something noble, yet on the other hand, trivial entertainment novels were what paid her bills. Added to this, Suttner realized that her moral motivation to write was considered to be an artistic faux pas. Suttner lamented to her friend and colleague, Alfred Hermann Fried: „Die Absicht Gutes zu wirken, gilt für so unkünstlerisch“ (Suttner, Letters to Alfred Hermann Fried, letter dated 23 August 1902). Katscher addressed this concern in this way:

Nur wer dem lächerlichen Vorurteil huldigt, dass ein Tendenzwerk, wenn es an sich noch so gut, kein Kunstwerk sei, kann finden, „Die Waffen nieder“ sei kein richtiger Roman, keine Kunstleistung. (43)

Suttner remained faithful to her feminist perception of literature as a means to an end, a notion she equally applied to the artist. She claimed that „der Dichtungsinhalt den Wert des Werkes bestimmt“ (Suttner, Schriftstellerroman 197). In her eyes, an artist was to consider herself/himself an activist, not a member of an artistic elite, but deeply committed to solving the problems of humanity. „Er [Sie] soll nützen, erheben, beglücken [...] freudenhemmende Vorurteile wegräumen, Aberglauben und Dunkel zerstören helfen“ (Suttner, Schriftstellerroman 149). Braker describes Suttner's moral

commitment as being tied to an „ethical imperative rather than aesthetic ideals“ (33). Suttner remained nevertheless realistic: she acknowledged the power of positive reviews and recognized the power public opinion could have over policy making.

A further advantage the novel possessed was its inconspicuousness. A genre generally considered inferior, the romantic social novel was not a likely political medium. Widely accepted as entertainment literature, it had the ability to approach the reader from an unexpected angle. Suttner realized that militarism had a long and influential history in Austria. War was an institution that had and still has its benefactors. The personal perspective of Suttner’s fictional biography presents an alternative view of Austria’s war politics without offending its readers. It is precisely this indirect approach that makes Suttner’s demands for peace so compelling. In this way, Suttner related to the reader on an individual basis--through Martha’s autobiography. The genre’s emotional appeal made the novel the ideal means to introduce a new perspective on peace.

Die Waffen nieder was revolutionary in its assessment of the interconnection of gender and war. The novel was the first of its kind to critique war as a political and social problem. Although many female memoirs that described personal war experiences previously existed, they did not attempt an analysis of this social malady. Furthermore, the popularity and publicity the novel received was unprecedented.

Suttner, like many female authors, initially had difficulty getting her book published due to its controversial contents. Although its popularity later proved its ability to capture a broad audience, the title alone was considered inappropriately bold. Nevertheless, once published, Die Waffen nieder, being a female-authored romance novel, seemed to pose no evident threat to its readers. Braker describes Die Waffen

nieder as: "... the most widely read fictional exposition of an anti-war message in the quarter century before 1914... The popular success of the novel [...] introduced thousands of readers to the arguments of pacifism and laid the groundwork for Suttner=s later work" (6).

### **Techniques used in the novel that transform the genre**

As has been shown, Suttner had many reasons for writing the book she did. After previously having looked at the grounds for her choice of genre, this chapter will examine the techniques she used that made the novel such an international success. Suttner clearly defined her goals for the novel in her memoirs:

Der Friedensliga wollte ich einen Dienst leisten--wie konnte ich das besser tun, als indem ich ein Buch zu schreiben versuchte, das ihre Ideen verbreiten sollte? Und am wirksamsten, so dachte ich, konnte ich das in Form einer Erzählung tun. Dafür würde ich sicherlich ein grösseres Publikum finden als für eine Abhandlung. In Abhandlungen kann man nur abstrakte Verstandesgründe legen, kann philosophieren, argumentieren und dissertieren; aber ich wollte anderes: ich wollte nicht nur, was ich dachte, sondern was ich fühlte--leidenschaftlich fühlte--, in mein Buch legen können, dem Schmerz wollte ich Ausdruck geben, den die Vorstellung des Krieges in meine Seele brannte; Leben, zuckendes Leben--Wirklichkeit, historische Wirklichkeit wollte ich vorführen, und das alles konnte nur ein Roman, am besten in einem in Form der Selbstbiographie geschriebenen Roman, geschehen. Und so ging ich und verfasste ADie Waffen Nieder.≅ (215)

As she asserted, her purpose was not to state opinions, but to convey emotion: war is a calamity for humankind. Suttner understood history as an arrangement of individual stories, not static data. By telling one of these stories, her novel passionately communicates historical events in a way that offers a new perspective and moves the reader to reevaluate her own convictions. As this analysis will show, Suttner correctly assessed the novel's potential to convey her message. Its ability to access the reader's emotional rationale makes the novel the ideal genre for Suttner's endeavor.

Suttner engaged as well as entertained her reader by creating a protagonist both men and women could admire. Intelligent, kind, beautiful and of noble birth, Martha in many ways personifies the ideal woman. Martha describes herself as a young girl: „Ich kann mir denken, welch beneidetes Geschöpf die jugendliche, als schön gepriesene, von allen Luxus umgebene Komtess Martha Althausen gewesen sein mochte“ (Die Waffen nieder 1). Like any romantic heroine, her beauty and birth allow the reader to escape into another world of glamour and opulence. Much like Scarlett O'Hara in „Gone with Wind“, Martha lives an exceptional life. Her compassionate nature and quick intellect only enhance her loveliness. Although her comfortable lifestyle is not representative of a typical eighteenth century woman, the reader relates to her emotions while admiring her from afar.

Martha is born into a family of soldiers and raised by an obsessive war-enthusiast father, yet she is unable to accept war as a fact of life and finds herself involuntarily challenging standard justifications for war provided by her environment. After waiting in vain to hear from her second husband Friedrich, who is fighting the Danes in the war in Schleswig-Holstein, Martha leaves to search for him on the battlefield of Königgratz. What she sees there painfully confirms her reservations

towards war. She is now convinced that the destruction of life and the suffering of the wounded soldiers are inexcusable. Once she returns home, she is unable to celebrate the end of the war. Her father, brother and sisters all die from the cholera epidemic that rages in Austria after the war.

Martha=s experience of war entreats readers to reevaluate their own positions. As a spectator of Martha=s *Bildungsprozess*, the reader undergoes a parallel process while being entertained. Since the novel=s political agenda was to change the contemporary view of war and help the budding peace movement, Suttner felt it important to have her message heard by more than a selected few. In this regard, Braker compares Suttner=s work with Harriet Beecher Stowe=s novel Uncle Tom=s Cabin. She states:

The two authors recognized the strength of support that resulted from law-maker=s orations and yellow journalism=s sensational slogans. Stowe and Suttner countered with descriptions of cruelty and depravity that would guarantee a response. The response would be remorse on the one hand and on the other an anger deep enough to inspire the will to change (134).

Suttner believed that audiences often respond better to simple and emotional terms rather than to higher logic and argument. An emotionally compelling novel allows authors to reach readers=s hearts and encourage a desire to change. In his analysis of rhetoric in anti-nuclear fiction, Patrick Mannix characterizes the power a novel has to motivate change in readers by its ability to:

put the emotional experience in real context by acknowledging the universal truths the events in the book portray. Only then will...emotions actually help to accomplish the change in attitude that rhetorical fiction aims at (138).

By allowing the reader to consider Suttner=s call for peace emotionally, the novel puts readers at ease and gently shuts down their intellectual defense mechanisms. By writing her novel as a fictional autobiography, Suttner maximized this effect; the book presents itself as a memoir rather than fiction. Martha integrates passages from her diaries to reconstruct her path to pacifism, which contributes to the novel=s feeling of authenticity. She recounts:

Am 10. März 1857 feierte ich meinen siebzenten Geburtstag. „Schon siebzehn“ lautet unter jenem Datum die Eintragung ins Tagebuch. Dieses „schon“ ist ein Poem. Es steht kein Kommentar daneben, aber vermutlich wollte ich damit sagen: „und noch nichts für die Unsterblichkeit getan.“ Diese roten Hefte leisten mir heute, da ich meine Lebenserrinerungen aufzeichnen will, gar gute Dienste. Sie ermöglichen mir, die vergangenen Ereignisse, welche nur als verschwommen Umrissbilder im Gedächtnis haften geblieben, bis in die kleinsten Einzelheiten zu schildern, und ganze längst vergessene Gedankenfolgen oder längst verklungene Gespräche wörtlich wiederzugeben. (Die Waffen nieder 4)

Consequently, the reader relates to the characters as real people, which reduces the need to be critical and creates a feeling of admiration for the protagonist's experiences. By presenting a plot that is more personal and difficult to attack, this connection to the assumed „author,“ wins allies for Suttner's cause without placing her in such a vulnerable position. Suttner is able to present her own beliefs and views as belonging to a fictional character. Martha's life is a theoretical platform that offers flexibility and dramatization. Unlike Suttner, financial obligations and constraints do not limit Martha. Her memoir thus appears to be sincerely written, without the need to adhere to literary conventions or the need to sell books. The form of a memoir additionally allows for a reading of another person's intimate feelings, adding a voyeuristic appeal to the story. The reader believes that she is witnessing authentic emotion. The effect is that, although fictional, the story is experienced as truth. Mannix states that:

...what we read in a novel or see in a film can--and does--reach through to our emotions as if it were real...We are also capable of an emotional reaction to fiction that depends on a more thoughtful involvement with the work. Often we *do* find some way to relate the characters and events of fiction to real life, whether by treating them as conditionals or by identifying them with actual people including ourselves (122).

Martha's character begs for the reader's compassion and appeals to a sense of reasoning. The war narrative, as experienced by Martha, stimulates reflection because it is encountered on a personal level. This feeling of "realness" simulates a fictional reality.

Guided by feminist convictions, Suttner, like most of her colleagues, was convinced that: „reality is the main criterion for quality“ (Anderson 209). This assumption guides the novel’s form and content, enabling it to teach ethics while pleasing aesthetics. Along these lines of feminist literary theory, the novel appeals to the reader by presenting historic reality. Suttner took particular care when writing Die Waffen nieder to accurately reconstruct the historical time period and battle scenes. Those who had not lived through war experiences are prompted to doubt war’s proclaimed glory. The factual feel makes pacifist ideology come alive and become a „reality“ for the reader; abstract peace theory receives “flesh and bones.” Through the use of graphic realism integrated in the protagonist’s biography, the romantic novel is transformed into a bloody testimony of war’s insanity.

Literary feminists used the “artistic representation of reality” to present a critique of existing moral conditions, and many, like Suttner herself, also used it to suggest a greater moral vision (Anderson 225). Through the course of Martha’s narrative, the link between Austria’s successive nationalist wars and the gendered and essentialist nature of the Empire’s social politics become apparent. Her life-story acts as a case study that provides concrete examples of gender’s crucial part in a military system. As she pursues her ambition to reveal the reasons for war and its overall support, Martha uncovers multiple dimensions of gender’s militarization in her society.

First, Martha experiences the prevalence of gender polarization in her own life. As her position on war crystallizes, her need grows to be acknowledged as a rational being. Martha’s personal feminist and pacifist evolutions parallel one another in her marital relationships. Although her first husband is never abusive, their relationship is based on rigid gender limitations. The differences between her two husbands illustrate the progression of her development towards pacifism. While both marriages are based



on love, Martha's maturity reflects itself in her choice of husbands. On her eighteenth birthday, Martha marries her first husband, Arno, a handsome and daring young officer. Her life personifies the scope and magnitude of the military's influence in Austria during the 1800s; her first marriage exemplifies the unquestioned acceptance of gender roles. Arno, on the one hand, feels inspired by the idea of having to protect his wife from the enemy, while Martha, on the other hand feels socially indebted to encourage and admire him for his bravery, regardless of whether she feels threatened or not. The roles in their relationship are clearly defined. As he outlines them:

Dein Platz ist hier an der Wiege des Kleinen, in dem auch ein Vaterlandsverteidiger gross gezogen werden soll. Dein Platz ist an unserem häuslichen Herd. Um diesen zu schützen und vor feindlichen Überfall zu wahren, um unserem Heim und unseren Frauen den Frieden zu erhalten, ziehen wir Männer ja in den Krieg  
(Die Waffen nieder 9).

Arno perceives their roles only in the context of a military system. Adherence to these prescribed roles seems to be a prerequisite for the system to function smoothly, if not for it to exist. Martha's father, General Althaus, also subscribes to the idea that gender roles support the institution of war. He even goes so far as to claim that militarization is not a social construct, but instead, it is a hereditary predisposition. Disgusted by his daughter's lack of patriotism, Althaus comforts himself with the belief that Martha's son cannot be swayed by her upbringing, but will heed his instinctual masculine desire to be a soldier. „Gutes Soldatenblut lügt nicht“ (Holmes 197), „Zum Glück wird der Junge nicht um deine Erlaubnis fragen; das Soldatenblut fließt ihm in

den Adern“ (Holmes 63). As Braker points out, Althaus argues that: „militarism is a trait of gender“ (89). Althaus applies this same principle to Friedrich despite his expressed disapproval of war: „Es wäre ihm aus sogenannten humanitären Gründen lieber, wenn es zu keiner Schlacht käme; ist es aber einmal dazu gekommen, so wollte er wohl auch lieber dabeisein, da regt sich wohl die männliche Kampfeslust“ (Holmes 134). According to this perspective, gender, rather than personal convictions, determines the kind of support a person gives in times of war.

Martha's use of rhetorical figures of language undermines the idea that a woman is incapable of logical thought. An analysis of her words exposes their hypotactical nature. As will be shown, Martha's memoirs are carefully constructed and display a sophisticated structure. Although Martha feigns a dismissal of her fears and the acceptance of societal dogma, she is in fact instilling doubts in the reader. Her exclamations and conclusions are not spontaneous or irrational, but carefully organized and logical. While Martha pretends to present cultural military conventions as fact, she carefully leads the reader to see the inconsistencies inherent in the idea of war. These inconsistencies seem particularly crass when contrasted with Martha's hypotactical style. Her clear patterned thoughts and rhetorical amplifications underscore her critique.

Initially, Martha attempts to suppress her doubts and fears with traditional reasoning, believing that her opinion as a woman can have little merit:

Fort mit meinem kindischen, weibischen Bangen! Jetzt galt es, mich dieser meiner Lieben würdig zu zeigen, das Herz über alle egoistischen Befürchtungen erheben und nur dem schönen Bewusstsein Raum geben:  
Mein Gatte ist mein Held. (Die Waffen nieder 12)

Regardless of their emotional nature, the irony of these words cannot help but strike the reader. The fact that Martha equates her natural fears with childishness and femininity subversively questions the notion. She defends herself by pleading necessity based on her gender (*dicaeologia*). This form of *aetiologia* gives a cause or reason that pretends to explain Martha's fears. However, it is also *apophasis*. Martha is pretending to deny what she is really affirming. An *argumentum ad verecundiam*, her statement appeals to traditional values, yet at the same time plants an implicit question in the readers' mind as to whether it is really only childish naivete to abhor war. The idea that casting away her fears will make her worthy and less selfish sounds equally absurd. In this light, Martha's conclusion, that she will concede agreement by simply honoring her husband as a hero instead of questioning and fearing his call to war seems ironic (*epitrope*). These carefully employed rhetorical devices strengthen Martha's argument against war by preparing the reader to question its legitimacy. The paradoxical conclusions she makes concerning war and her role in it offer a theoretical, yet realistic realm in which to question the dilemma. Martha's skilled rhetoric simply makes the problem she is addressing more apparent to the reader. This brief analysis equally reveals something about her character. Although she claims to be nothing but a foolish woman, her subtle use of language and logic attest to the contrary. Martha alleges that her fears are purely emotional, but her words only undermine the conclusion she feigns.

When Arno receives his orders to leave, Martha instinctively doubts his return. Trying to console her, Arno reassures her of how happy they will be when he comes home decorated with medals. Again, by questioning her emotions, Martha petitions the reader to sympathize instead of argue with her:

Wie klein ich doch wieder dachte: Sterne und Kreuze erschienen mir in diesem Augenblick als so schaler Flitter. . . Nicht zehn Goldkreuze auf dieser teuern Brust konnten einen Ersatz bieten für die graus[ig]e Möglichkeit, dass eine Kugel sie zerschmetterte. . .

(Die Waffen nieder 13)

Martha's doubts expose the artificial reality that sustains the war system. Her remark pleads with the reader to reevaluate reasons for sending men out to kill each other. *Auxesis*, the use of a heightened word in place of an ordinary one e.g. „schaler Flitter,“ „zerschmetterte,“ and *cohortio*, amplification that moves the reader's indignation, both appeal to common sense and humanity. The rhetorical constructions Martha incorporates in her writing function as support for her argument against war. She attempts to present a solid case by making a strong connection between *logos*, *ethos* and *pathos*. When analyzing the presentation of ideas in the novel, Martha's structured delivery display her awareness of these classic rhetorical elements. Here, Martha is again pretending to deny what she truly wants to affirm (*apophasis*). She introduces her reservations by belittling them: “Wie klein ich doch wieder dachte,” yet the way in which she describes war's fraudulent politics generates an uneasy feeling. Although Martha's appeal is emotional, the reader must agree that her instincts are closer to reality than the military's readily accepted political agenda.

In this manner, the novel criticizes abstract military rhetoric that ignores the incredible suffering of individuals caused by the military-industrial complex which prepares for and perpetuates war (Peach 159). Feminists such as Sara Ruddick and Jean Bethke Elshtain elaborate on the strategic neglect and abstraction of the individual by

male-derived militarization. Like Suttner, they recognize that militarization facilitates a position that views individuals as instruments, „as means sacrificed to the end of the State winning the war“ (Davis 475). The novel’s realism undercuts the right of a State to such powerful capacities, as well as the citizen’s willingness to comply. Martha manifests this perception of the State in a conversation with her father. When she expresses her grief over the loss of her first husband, he promptly scolds her: “Du denkst immer nur an dich und an den einzelnen Menschen. Aber in dieser Frage handelt es sich um Österreich.” To this he responds: “Und besteht dieses nicht aus lauter einzelnen Menschen?” (Die Waffen nieder 28). Here she poses the question not only to her father but also to the reader (*anacoenosis*). Althaus, Martha’s father, has been so militarized that for him the family unit only serves the purpose of protecting the state. The individual’s life receives meaning when in service of the nation. As a result, the family primarily exists to serve a higher militaristic purpose:

Eine so geringe Sache, wie eines einzelnen Soldaten Leben [verschwindet] in der grossen Sache, für die er es gelassen hat, gänzlich. Du, meine Tochter, bist lange nicht patriotisch genug gesinnt. Aber ich will jetzt nicht mit dir zanken...Die Hauptsache ist, dass du wieder gesund wirst und dich für deine Rudi erhältst, um einen tüchtigen Mann und Vaterlandsverteidiger aus ihm heranzubilden.

(Holmes 159)

Althaus is blind to the fact that this logic only perpetuates a vicious circle. His statement supports Arno’s characterization of a woman’s role in a militarized society, which is to raise and support the men that must go to war so that she can continue

doing her job, hence making war possible. Martha, however, is unwilling to accept this logic without question. After experiencing the effects of war and the death of her husband, Martha decides to change her son Rudi's upbringing. Her father's protestations again reflect his perception of the family as an extension of the state's organized military system. This view perceives the family as a smaller biological unit of the greater national family. Hence, such an understanding of nationalism fosters a heightened willingness to „protect“ one's nation or family. Nation therefore becomes synonymous with family. Clearly, the militarization of the nation is replicated in the militarization of the family. „Die Tradition unserer Familie fordert es, dass der Spross eines Dotzky und einer Althaus seine Dienste dem Vaterland weihe.“ (Holmes 62) Althaus' words express the holy quality militarism has taken on in order to perpetuate itself. The religious connotation of such thinking is a powerful tool that sustains the system.

Martha encountered this position, not only among family members, but also in general.

Der menschliche Standpunkt --nämlich dass, ob verloren oder gewonnen, jede Schlacht unzählige Blut- und Tränenopfer fordert--kam gar nicht in Betracht. Die hier in Frage stehenden Interessen wurden als so sehr über alle Einzelschicksale erhaben dargestellt, dass ich mich der Kleinlichkeit meiner Auffassung schämte, wenn mir bisweilen der Gedanke aufstieg: AAch, was frommt den armen Toten, was den armen Verkrüppelten, was den armen Witwen der Sieg?≅ Doch bald stellten sich als Antwort auf diese verzagten Fragen wieder die alten Schulbuchdithyramben ein: Ersatz für alles bietet der **Ruhm**. Doch wie, wenn der Feind siegte? Diese Frage liess ich einmal im Kreise meiner

militärischen Freunde laut werden -- wurde aber schmäählich niedergezischt. Das blosse Erwähnen von der Möglichkeit eines Schattens eines Zweifels ist schon antipatriotisch

(Die Waffen nieder<sup>10</sup>).

This quote again displays Martha's use of rhetorical figures of speech. The excerpt presents itself as internal musing, and yet her use of *hypophora* (asking questions and then answering them) is carefully thought through. She leaves no question as to which conclusions the reader is supposed to make. Sarcasm penetrates the tone and contradicts the statements. By retelling this past experience from a present perspective, Martha uses her naivete to shame those that cling to absurd definitions of war. Again she pretends to deny what she is truth is affirming (*apophasis*). By repeating the adjective "armen" three times (*diacope*) to describe the state of those scarred by war, Martha petitions for these individuals, reminding the reader that war's victories are always a defeat. "Niedergezischt" sharply calls the reader's attention to the insecure position of patriotism. These devices amplify Martha's argument and prove her rhetorical finesse and persuasive intent.

Obviously, Martha is not completely convinced by militarism's crude logic. She does, however, allow herself to be initially pacified by her husband's confidence, only to find herself a widow. Four years after the sudden death of her young husband, Martha soberly describes their short and passionate marriage:

Wir hatten uns angebetet, wie ein paar feurige Verliebte; aber Herz in Herz, Geist in Geist aufgegangen, in gegenseitiger Hochachtung und Freundschaft fest verbunden, wie dies manche Eheleute nach langen

Jahren geteilter Leiden und Freuden sind – das waren wir beide nicht gewesen. (Die Waffen nieder 31)

Martha concedes that a relationship based on equal partnership and mutual admiration takes years to evolve. Her matured ideal of marriage reflects her developed sense of female equality. During her years of early widowhood, Martha begins to question the necessity of her husband's death. Tempted to simply blame him for not loving her enough to stay, Martha realizes that Arno's eagerness to go to war had its roots in a system beyond his understanding. Slowly, Martha begins to suspect that Arno's enthusiasm for war was not based on educated convictions, but societal militarization.

She critically continues:

Auch ich war ja sein Höchstes, sein Unentbehrlichstes nicht; wäre er sonst so frohgemut und ohne zwingende Pflicht – sein Regiment hat niemals ausrücken müssen – fort von mir? (Die Waffen nieder, 31)

Here, Martha's choice of words reveals her intent as she utilizes *cohortio*, a form of amplification that awakens the reader's indignation. The word „frohgemut“ implies a cheerful and excited feeling that seems inappropriate in this context. Arno's eagerness to go to battle contradicts his dedication to his wife. How can he claim that his sole reason in going to war is to protect her when she does not feel threatened? There is no „zwingende Pflicht“ in her opinion. Martha's comment implies that there must be a different, more selfish reason for Arno's enthusiasm in having to leave their family and going to war. Clearly, Martha is criticizing the military propaganda and indoctrination that permeates her life.



After Arno's death, Martha chooses a new, self-elected direction for her life. Now free to pursue her interests, she takes a closer look at the life she once led and the assumptions she felt herself forced to accept.

Zudem war ich in den vier Jahren allmählich eine andere geworden; mein geistiger Gesichtskreis hatte sich in vielem erweitert; ich war in den Besitz von Kenntnissen und Anschauungen gelangt, von welchen ich zur Zeit meiner Verheiratung keine Ahnung gehabt und von welchen auch Arno – das wusste ich jetzt zu beurteilen – sich kein Begriff gemacht und so hätte er meinem jetzigen Seelenleben – wäre er auferstanden – in mancher Richtung fremd gegenüber gestanden.

(Die Waffen nieder 31)

Rather than reigniting a new solidarity with her country's wars, study and contemplation lead Martha to sources that legitimize rather than numb her doubts. This emotional and intellectual maturation influences Martha's choice of her second husband, Friedrich, who shares her convictions concerning war. Unlike her first husband, Friedrich returned from the battlefield changed by scenes of death and destruction. Although he is an honorable soldier, unlike many of his peers, he is not hesitant to speak of war's true character -- devastating and dehumanizing. Finally meeting someone who shares her abhorrence of war, Martha is attracted to Friedrich's integrity. Sensing his unusual attitude towards war, she asks:

Vorhin, in Ihrer Ausdrucksweise, haben Sie einen Ton angeschlagen, der in meinem Gemüte eine gewisse Saite vibrieren gemacht -- ohne Umschweife, Sie verabscheuen den Krieg? (Die Waffen nieder 40).

In her second marriage there is no contrived assignment of war-related roles. On the contrary, both partners oppose the glorification of war. They feel responsible to fight against such notions and by doing so enjoy a far deeper relationship and truer partnership than Martha's first marriage. Equal partners, both dedicate their lives to combatting the false associations with and justifications for war. In this sense, Martha's marriages, on the one hand, reflect the development of individuality, and on the other hand correlate to her case against war. In this way, the novel supports the feminist belief in "individual change as a precondition of social change" (Anderson 104). As Martha's opinions become more educated, her desire for social change grows. From a feminist perspective, her second marriage is exemplary, since it is based on common political values. Such marriages, it was believed, fostered educated convictions that would be conveyed to children. This was real social change. Martha's second marriage hence models the kind of cooperation that must occur between men and women in order for lasting social change to take place.

Martha's description of historical narrative reveals the far from subtle mechanisms of militarization. By familiarizing children with the gory details of war early on, war becomes a normal and familiar part of life to look forward to. This perverted relationship to war and its violence is militarized pedagogy. However, Martha notices the differences drawn between girls and boys. Her own childhood fantasies of war clearly exemplify the gendered nature of such indoctrination.

Commenting on the militaristic values promoted by Austrian schools, Martha points out the clear distinction made in the education of boys and girls:

Die Mädchen – welche zwar nicht ins Feld ziehen sollen – werden aus denselben Büchern unterrichtet, die auf die Soldatenzüchtung der Knaben angelegt sind, und so entsteht bei der weiblichen Jugend dieselbe Auffassung, die sich in Neid, nicht mittun zu dürfen, und in Bewunderung für den Militärstand auflöst. (Die Waffen nieder 3)

Suttner critically addressed the idea that women's primary role during war is passive. As Jennifer Turpin describes in the preface of the Women and War Reader, there are many examples of military generated propaganda that strategically link motherhood, nationalism and militarism. A British leaflet issued to the young women of England, in 1917 asked:

Is your „best boy“ wearing khaki? If not, don't you think he should be? If he does not think that you and your country are worth fighting for, do you think he is worthy of you? If your young man neglects his duty to his king, and his country, the time will come when he will neglect YOU. Think it over- then ask him to JOIN THE ARMY. (qtd in Turpin PAGE?)

This statement exemplifies the manner in which female agency is manipulated to support militaristic nationalist endeavors. Die Waffen nieder was published at a time when women did not have the vote. As has already been discussed, women were

thought to be incapable of the rational faculties needed for participating in public debates. Read in this context, Suttner's novel shows gender's critical role and women's subsequent political status. Clearly, a woman does not have to hold a political office to influence the politics of her country. In like manner, the novel's pacifist ideology is heavily based on a gendered perception of war. War and its military system are sustained by the gender roles it assigns. Suttner identified this foundation and illustrated its workings in her novel.

In their book Arms and the Woman, Cooper, Munich and Squier look at the portrayal of gender in the war narrative. They declare: „We consider gender one of the crucial organizing principles in the war system...[and] regard literature as implicated in both the war system and the gender system and as instrumental in perpetuating the ancient essentialist war myth“ (xv). By revealing this phenomenon, Suttner mediated an alliance between the women's movement and the peace movement by means of her novel. Her choice of genre is consistent with her assessment of female competence. As the analysis and reception of the novel have shown, the romantic novel's designation as a feminine genre proved to be a powerful political tool.

Martha's life makes visible the ways in which women are indeed political. As Martha begins to recognize her function in the military system, she begins to see the power this position gives her. In response to Martha's determination to keep her son Rudolf from becoming a soldier, her father exclaims: “Wenn alle Mütter so dächten!” Martha's retort reveals her confidence in women's societal role. She replies: “Dann gäbe es keine Paraden und Revüen – und keine Männerwälle zum Niederschiessen – kein ‘Kanonenfutter,’ wie der bezeichnende Ausdruck heisst. Das wäre auch ein Unglück” (Die Waffen nieder 43). Here, Martha again uses rhetorical devices such as *auxesis* and *cohortatio* to argue her pacifist position. Martha's logic is simple. If all

mothers refused to send their sons to war there **could be** no war. From this perspective, mothers are the ones that sustain war by providing the “Kanonenfutter” needed to engage in war. Clearly, the problem of war is far more complex than this solution concludes, however, the notion that women hold inherent public power is crucial for Suttner to solving the problem of war.

Understanding that war is gendered and that women have political sway, however, posed its challenges for many feminists. Some feminist ideologies responded with essentialist polarisations as destructive as the militaristic ideals they opposed. Sabine Hering and Cornelia Wenzel look at the challenges feminists face[d] when addressing war in the German women’s pacifist movement from 1892-1933:

Weder das Opfer noch die Mahnende, die auf ihre Gelegenheit zum Eingreifen noch wartet, begreift ihren Anteil an den Krisen und Kriegen der Gesellschaft. Doch durch ihr lautstarkes oder stillschweigendes Einverständnis mit der Geschlechterpolarisierung in Familie und Öffentlichkeit, lassen beide – indem sie ihre Rolle als Frauenrolle wie auch immer annehmen und ausfüllen – den Männern ihren Part: den patriarchalen, chauvinistischen, aggressiven, zerstörerischen Part. (95)

Although the exploitation of gender roles for military purposes seems easy to expose, the necessity not to essentialize gender in a way that leaves room for agency is more challenging. When peace is claimed as female territory, then men have little choice other than to assert that war is their assigned role. Suttner recognized this dangerous dead-end. The character of Friedrich, Martha’s second husband, functions as a counterbalance to this polarization. As an officer, Friedrich is part of the military

system. His personal struggle with military values introduces the idea that men are not naturally warmongers and must not be stereotyped as such. Instead, his character is portrayed as sincere and at odds with his societal role and obligation as a soldier. While the novel is written from a female perspective, the sensitive and critical accounts of war provided by Friedrich counterbalance any temptation to essentialize men as war-loving and domineering. In a conversation with Minister Allerdings, Friedrich reveals his dislike of war:

Gestatten Sie mir, Exzellenz, [...] für meine Person gegen Zumutung mich zu verwahren, dass ich einen Krieg herbeiwünsche. Und auch gegen die Unterstellung zu protestieren, als dürfe der militärische Standpunkt ein anderer sein als die menschliche. Wir sind da, um, wenn der Feind das Land bedroht, dasselbe zu schützen, gerade so wie die Feurwehr da ist, um, wenn ein Brand ausbricht denselben zu löschen. Damit ist weder der Soldat berechtigt, einen Krieg, noch der Feuermann, einen Brand herbeizuwünschen. Beides bedeutet Unglück, schweres Unglück, und als Mensch darf keiner am Unglück seiner Mitmenschen sich erfreuen. (Holmes 96-97)

The fact that he can even admit that the military system is problematic is refreshing and attractive to Martha. Neither Martha nor Friedrich believe that they alone can change the system, yet they hope to be a part of a human development towards peace. Their balanced and complementary relationship exemplifies the cooperation that must take place on a political level.

Suttner encouraged women to take part in carrying the responsibility to stop war. Gender equality hence equates with shared accountability and responsibility for peace making. Although Suttner acknowledges the different ways women and men experience war, she is careful not to assign a greater value to one or the other. In this way, she acknowledges that women will not be pacifists simply because of their gender. As Jodi York put it in her article, *The Truth about Women and Peace*:

Much has been made in Western culture of the dichotomy between „women’s peace“ and „men’s war.“ We can see the importance of this dichotomy in politics, media, education and socialization, where women are expected to be inherently creative, nurturing and peaceful, while men are bold, courageous warriors. For more than a hundred years, these differences have been the foundation for banal arguments that peace is a women’s issue. (Turpin 19)

Suttner believed Austria’s nationalist wars were nurtured by essentialist social politics. As she explains in her essay, Das Maschinenalter (1889), „Die Polarisierung der Geschlechter ist eine Voraussetzung des militärischen Ideals.“ (qtd. in Brinker-Gabler *Psychologie der Frau* 45-60.) Consequently, Suttner avoided an essentialist view of women as inherent peacemakers as well as static or one-dimensional characters. Martha, for example moves from being a naïve supporter of military dogma to being a passionate pacifist. She begins by recognizing her own participation in the system and refuses to accept essentialist generalizations. Her memoirs open with an account of personal juvenile desires to fight and conquer. By introducing herself in this way, she not only places herself in a familiar cultural position, but acknowledges that

women have equal potential to embrace violence when conditioned accordingly. Martha recalls: “Ich erinnere mich, dass der höchste Begriff menschlicher Grösse mir im kriegerischem Heldentum verkörpert schien” (Die Waffen nieder 2). Martha makes mention of several historic examples of women who break the essentialist mold: „Ach, wie schön las sich’s in der Geschichte von einer Semiramis oder Katarina II.: ‘sie führte mit diesem oder jenem Nachbarstaate Krieg – sie eroberte dieses oder jenes Land...’“ (Die Waffen nieder 2). And again: “O Jeanne d’Arc – du himmelsbegrnadete Heldenjungfrau, könnt ich sein wie du! Die Oriflamme schwingen, meinen König krönen und dann sterben – für das Vaterland, das Teure” (Die Waffen nieder 1). This background captures Suttner’s rejection of essentialist presuppositions and her faith in humanity’s ability to change when properly educated.

Suttner offered several examples of female willingness to support their society’s militarism. Martha’s girlfriend, Lori is also married to a soldier. In contrast to Martha, she is thrilled when war is declared. She is hopeful that battle will offer her husband opportunities for promotion. Her participation in the war system is explicit. Lori’s support and admiration for military prestige proves to be a very powerful means of sustaining war as an institution. Social incentives such as promotions and prestige were generated in order to motivate men to join the military. Political interests furthermore created an arena in which men could attain social rewards. Such attitudes constitute the concept of militarized citizenship, that is, when citizenship is based on the individual’s ability to fight for his country (Turpin 10).

Although she strongly appeals to the reader’s emotions, Suttner is constantly backing up Martha’s protests with contemporary theory and logical contemplation. This approach appeals to an intellectual audience, both male and female. Suttner makes no distinctions in intellect on the basis of gender, but rather on an individual basis only.



That is, rather than differentiating between men and women, instead, it looks at those who question war and those who don't. This form of feminism does not portray women as mere victims of male aggression and dominion. It assumes female responsibility for participation. Equality therefore presupposes and invites equal accountability.

Martha begins to question her own part in supporting war as an institution that she does not understand or agree with. As a young girl, she benefits from her father's military status as a general. She marries a soldier and admires the military. In fact, she stresses her enthusiasm for the military. Yet, regardless of her socialization, she has difficulty overcoming her reservations. Martha describes her reaction to the threat of war. "Ich fiel auf die Knie – ich konnte nicht anders. Lautlos und dennoch heftig wie ein Schrei, schwang sich aus meiner Seele die Bitte zum Himmel: "Frieden, Frieden" (Die Waffen nieder 10). In this short exclamation, Martha employs several rhetorical tactics intended to move the reader. She begins with a parallelism of sounds and syllables (*paromoiosis*.) The balanced structure of the two sentences visualizes the connection between begging and helplessness. A brief, antithetical definition (*horismus*) of her cry follows. Here, the act of begging becomes more of a prayer (*deesis*)—a vehement supplication of the gods. Martha's cry to heaven "peace, peace" (*epizeuxis*) forcefully conveys the fervency of her prayer (*palilogia*). The one word sums up all that she desires. This emotional utterance pleads with the readers to feel the same (*exuscitatio*). In the corresponding conversation with Arno, Martha uses additional tropes to persuade the reader of her case for peace. Her critique develops into a more concrete image. Gender as a sustaining factor in war becomes apparent.

Arno hob mich auf: 'Du närrisches Kind!' Ich schlang meine Arme um seinen Hals und fing zu weinen an. Es war kein Schmerzensausbruch,

denn noch war ja das Unglück nicht entschieden – aber die Nachricht hatte mich so erschüttert, dass meine Nerven zitterten und diesen Tränensturz verursachten. ‘Martha, Martha, du wirst mich böse machen’ schalt Arno. ‘Bist du denn nicht mein braves Soldatenweiblein? Vergissegst du, dass du Generalstochter, Oberleutnantsfrau und’ – schloss er lächelnd – Korporalsmutter bist?’ ‘Nein, nein mein Arno...Ich begreife mich selber nicht...Das war nur so ein Anfall...ich bin ja doch selber für militärischen Ruhm begeistert...aber ich weiss nicht – vorhin, als du sagtest, alles hänge von *einem* Worte ab, das jetzt gesprochen werden soll – ein Ja oder Nein auf das sogenannte Ultimatum – und dieses Ja oder Nein solle entscheiden, ob Tausende bluten und sterben sollen – sterben in diesen sonnigen, seligen Frühlingstagen – da war mir, als müsste das Friedenswort fallen und ich konnte nicht anders als betend niederknien. (Die Waffen nieder 11)

Here, Martha is treated as a child. But, since she is the one writing her memoirs, the reader must remember that it is **she** that is portraying herself as child. Her husband acts like her father who scolds her for her foolish sentiments. He refers to her as his “Soldatenweiblein”-- his little soldierwoman. Although meant as endearing, it is patronizing and symbolic of her female role in the war system. She is to be submissive and compliant to the facts of life as relayed to her by male authority figures. She is told to deny her feelings of compassion and her “selfish” desires for peace. “Ich begreife mich selber nicht.” Although Martha claims to question and doubt her feelings she is able to lay out her thoughts and reasoning far better than Arno, who can only repeat military propaganda. Despite a feigned naivete and emotionally charged words, the

underlying logic makes war sound ridiculous. Her words seem more like a parody as she contrasts the image of thousands of men dying on a sunny spring day. Spring represents rebirth and new life, not death. Martha repeats the phrase “Ja oder Nein” stressing the absurdity that such a short word can decide over life and death for thousands of men. She emphasizes that her reaction was compulsive, a natural reflex, innate to all humans. Their conversation demonstrates the idea that it is socialization that suppresses these instincts. This thought evokes associations such as peace/nature and war/society. As in the preceding quote, Martha’s impulsive reactions seem spontaneous, and reveal the implicit message: her reaction is true and honest human feeling.

Arno’s argument that Martha should know better since she is a daughter, wife and mother of military lineage emphasizes the factor of socialization. Furthermore, his suggestion that she is the mother of a future corporal depicts the inevitable fact that war is here to stay; she cannot change this “truth.” War hence belongs to the past, the present and the future.

This closer look at the text exposes Martha/Suttner’s true character. Martha’s logically structured petition is not the rambling of an ignorant girl. In fact, her careful and clever use of language contradicts this pretense. On the one hand, her language presents a powerful argument for a pacifist stance. On the other hand, Martha’s skillful use of language and logic argue for a new look at women’s intellectual abilities. This two-sided polemic represents Suttner’s main idea: war and gender ideologies go hand in hand.

This excerpt also demonstrates the subversive manner in which Suttner/Martha presents her argument. As mentioned before, the form of her words reflects Martha’s and Suttner’s belief in unacknowledged female competence. In the same way that the

romantic novel had no intellectual credibility, women were considered to lack reason. Suttner uses both of these stigmas to undermine themselves. Martha capitalizes on her childlike role to elicit empathy and understanding in the same way as the novel itself.

In fact, the form in which she chose to write her pacifism is addressed primarily to women. Although she strongly appeals to the reader's emotions, Suttner is constantly backing up Martha's protests with contemporary theory and logical contemplation. This approach not only presupposes female intellectual equality, but also appeals to male logic. Women are recognized and addressed as equal culprits in war. This form of feminism does not portray women as mere victims of male aggression and domination, but rather assumes responsibility for female participation. Equality therefore assumes and invites equal accountability.

Although Suttner's strategy to emotionally engage her reader was, from a traditional male view, feminine and consequently inferior, Suttner recognized that appealing to the emotions of her readers was far more moving than solely trying to impress their intellect. Nevertheless, the purpose of her book remained to educate and motivate her readers to facilitate social reformation. This ambitious goal made it crucial for her to find a literary voice that would appeal to women as well as men. By integrating contemporary theory, Die Waffen nieder displays not only Suttner's confidence in women's intellect, but at the same time addresses a skeptical male audience. Martha is convinced that war is regressive. She refers to Thomas Buckles' The History of Civilization where he relates a people's love of war to its stage of historical and cultural development. She writes,

Die Geschichte der Menschheit wird nicht -- wie dies die alte  
Auffassung war -- durch die Könige und Staatsmänner, durch die Kriege

und Traktate bestimmt, welche der Ehrgeiz der einen und die Schlaueit der anderen ins Leben rufen, sondern durch die allmähliche Entwicklung der Intelligenz. Die Hof- und Schlachtenchroniken, welche in den Historienbücher aneinander gereiht sind, stellen einzelne Erscheinungen der jeweiligen Kulturzustände vor, nicht aber deren bewegende Ursachen. Von der althergebrachten Bewunderung, mit welcher andere Geschichtsschreiber die Lebensläufe gewaltiger Eroberer und Landverwüster zu erzählen pflegen, konnte ich im Buckle gar nichts finden. Im Gegenteil, er führt den Nachweis, dass das Ansehen des Kriegerstandes im umgekehrten Verhältnis zu der Kulturhöhe eines Volkes steht: je tiefer in der barbarischen Vergangenheit zurück, desto häufiger die gegenseitiger Bekriegung und desto enger die Grenzen des Friedens [...] Er betont, dass im Fortschritt der Gesellschaft, mehr als noch der Krieg selber, die Liebe zum Krieg im Schwinden begriffen sei. ( Die Waffen nieder 33)

Another rhetorical device that enhances the didactic appeal of the text is the way that the novel clusters key terms to create vivid associations in the reader's mind. Peace is always spoken of in relation to "Fortschritt," "Bildung" and "Menschlichkeit." War, on the other hand is closely linked to images such as "Blut," "Stillstand" and "Barbaren." Although Suttner makes no attempts to hide her ideological beliefs, the connections Martha makes in the novel reveal the underlying assumptions of her tenets.

Suttner could have assumed that since it was a romantic *Gesellschaftsroman*, mostly women would read the novel, and hence lack ambition for her audience. Instead, Die Waffen nieder is full of theoretical backings for her critique, inspired by

contemporary theories that personally influenced her. Many of the ideas she refers to in the novel, e.g. Darwinism, were still controversial at the time. Martha recounts a conversation between several educated men when the subject of Darwinism came up. The heated discussion about Darwin's scandalous „*Affentheorie*“ can be read as a metaphor to Suttner's ambitious exposition of Austria's militaristic society and demands for change. Friedrich von Tilling, Martha's second husband comments on the human tendency to dismiss a new idea without understanding its basic precepts. He remarks:

auch wenn sie sich später bewahrheiten sollen, werden neue Hypothesen anfänglich immer von Zopfpartei unter den Gelehrten bestritten. Diese lässt auch heute nicht gern an ihren althergebrachten Anschauungen und Dogmen rütteln; gerade so wie damals nicht nur die Kirchenväter, sondern ebenso die Astronomen. (Die Waffen nieder 48)

Furthermore, the novel dodges the risk of offending egos by capitalizing on Martha's naivete. Considering the passionate nature of patriotism for many of the readers, posing questions instead of provoking confrontation avoided knee-jerk reactions. Suttner recognized that criticism from the mouth of a young girl had little authority and could easily be dismissed as irrational observations. Through time, the timid doubts she expressed in her first marriage become the educated conclusions of her second. Suttner raised critical issues by having Martha challenge Austria's pro-war stance. Yet, again the methods are subtle; initially, Martha only asks questions. After only a brief time together, Arno, is called to war. Heart-broken and frightened, Martha

asks a question which resonates with the anguish any mother, wife or daughter experiences in the face of war. She exclaims:

Warum konnte ich in jener Nacht bei dem Worte Krieg durchaus nicht mehr dessen erhabene historische Bedeutung erfassen, sondern nur sein toddrohendes Grausen? (Die Waffen nieder 17)

Such a question allows readers to determine their own answer. Martha has no ready answers herself, but invites readers to question and hypothesize with her, creating an interactive rather than defensive text. Martha's first step toward pacifism is therefore to question how something as barbaric and destructive as war can find general support. What makes a mother aspire to a military career for her son? Why do young men dream of medals and battle? Why do women find men in uniform attractive?

Not only do questions prove to be more thought-provoking in this context but also less alienating, especially when articulated as a young girl's opinion. Martha's questions invite the reader to accompany her on her search for answers, subsequently preparing readers to understand the grounds for her pacifist beliefs. These aspects of Suttner's novel all work together toward her goal of promoting peace.

An avid and educated reader of history, Martha can't help but notice the romanticized tone in which history is told. She has no difficulty remembering the appeal that glorified accounts of battles and victories had for her as a child. She recalls that her longing to contribute to history went so far that she wished to be a boy, so that she could have part in war's splendor. War and history seemed to be something synonymous. However, with time her historical role models begin to lose their legitimacy:

So ganz und gar konnte ich mich doch nicht mehr in jene Stimmungen meiner Mädchenzeit zurückversetzen, wo ich es mit der Jungfrau von Orleans hätte gleich tun mögen. Vieles, vieles in den gelesenen überschwenglichen Ruhmestiraden, welche die Schlachtberichte begleiteten, klang mir falsch und hohl, wenn ich mir zugleich die Schrecken der Schlacht vergegenwärtigte – so falsch und hohl, wie eine als Preis für eine echte Perle erhaltene Blechmünze.

(Die Waffen nieder 32)

The manner in which war was depicted presented a paradox for Martha. How could war be something so wonderful if it meant such suffering? “Die Perle Leben – ist die wohl ehrlich bezahlt mit den Blechphrasen der geschichtlichen Nachrufe?” (Die Waffen nieder 32). Martha deplores the manner in which history is used to militarize her nation’s youth. She sees this kind of historical narrative as the perpetuator of the myth of war, since it gives the impression that war is inevitable. War, hence, becomes merely a “normal” and expected part of human existence:

Das alles geht klar und einhellig aus allen Lehr- und Lesebüchern „für den Schulgebrauch“ hervor, ... Das gehört so zum patriotischen Erziehungssystem. Da aus jedem Schüler ein Vaterlandsverteidiger herangebildet werden soll, so muss doch schon des Kindes Begeisterung für diese seine erste Bürgerpflicht geweckt werden; man muss seinen Geist abhärten gegen den natürlichen Abscheu, den die Schrecken des Krieges hervorrufen könnten, indem man von den furchtbarsten



Blutbädern und Metzeleien, wie von etwas ganz Gewöhnlichem, Notwendigen, so unbefangen als möglich erzählt, dabei nur allein Nachdruck auf die ideale Seite dieses alten Völkerbrauches Legend -- und auf diese Art gelingt es, ein kampfmütiges und kriegslustiges Geschlecht zu bilden  
(Die Waffen nieder 3).

Again, a rhetorical analysis of the excerpt exposes a number of rhetorical devices that amplify Martha's judgement. *Metaphor, simile, auxesis, erotesis, enthymeme, anacoenosis and epanodos* all testify of the text's hypotactic nature. Such rhetorical elements are not the product of spontaneous thought. Much careful consideration and thought went into the formulation of these ideas. The arguments and conclusions are clearly mapped out with the intention to persuade the reader. Although Martha pretends to be something that she is not, (e.g. irrational when in fact rational,) her style is still honest. First of all, as discussed earlier, the novel's style intentionally mirrors the novel's ideas. Secondly, since a memoir is written in the past, in this case by a now pacifist Martha, it would be in reality very difficult for her to reenact her "uneducated" responses. While she bases her account on "die roten Hefte," her journals, it is the way she speaks and not what she speaks that gives away her motives. A rhetorical analysis reveals therefore that Martha is indeed intent on persuading the reader. Yet this is consistent with the novel's categorical title "Down with Arms!" and in no way minimizes Martha's character.

An outspoken advocate of peace, the novel makes no attempt to feign objectivity. Instead of ignoring large gaps in her analysis of war, Martha, in response to her son's concern as to the thoroughness of her biography's scope and purpose admits:

Mein Lieber, wo denkst du hin? Ich habe ja nur sagen können, was sich in meinem Leben--in meinen beschränkten Erfahrungs- und Empfindungskreisen abgespielt [hat]. Alle Seiten der Fragen beleuchtet? Gewiss nicht! Was weiss ich z.B.--ich, die reiche hochgestellte--von den Leiden, die der Krieg über die Massen des Volkes verhängt? Was kenne ich von den Plagen und bösen Einflüssen des Kasernenlebens? Und die wissenschaftlichen Grundlagen? Wie komme ich dazu, in ökonomisch-sozialen Fragen bewandert zu sein, und diese sind es--so viel weiss ich nur--welche schliesslich alle Umbildungen bestimmen... Keine Geschichte des vergangenen und zukünftigen Völkerrechts stellen diese Blätter dar--eine Lebensgeschichte nur. (Die Waffen nieder 296)

This conclusion functions not only as a disclaimer, but also as a means of strengthening the emotional emphasis of the novel. Martha consciously concludes with this admission, instead of using it as a preface. The effects would have been very different had Martha began her argument with her final assessment. As a conclusion, this admittance does not weaken the strength of the argument. It can be read as a footnote, rather than an apology. As she does throughout the novel, Martha avoids giving answers to questions she has not yet posed. Although there is no lack of didacticism, the author first asks the questions before giving her response. As has been discussed in depth, this style allows the reader to search out her own answers before being presented with the author's conclusions. Additionally, Martha is emphasizing the emotional and subjective nature of her story. As she has done throughout the text, she makes reference to her gender and social status to qualify her thoughts. Nevertheless, read in its appropriate context and with its purpose in mind, the novel must be praised for its ingenious exploitation of

resources. Its purpose was to emotionally engage readers in a discourse on war. Martha attained this goal by using rhetorical devices and logical arguments. As she reminds the reader, the novel focuses primarily on **one** aspect of war. I have attempted to show that this fundamental aspect is gender. Surely, there are multitudes of other factors that contribute to the problematic of war. But, as this analysis has shown gender underlies and can be connected to most of them.

### **Conclusion: Equality vs. Essentialism**

Influenced by feminist thought, Suttner recognized that war as a women's issue must be accounted for and addressed. She questioned particular militarized gender roles, because they perpetuate an artificial and destructive gap between the sexes. As she made clear, gender constructions that exist only to sustain military organisations are harmful to both sexes. The idea that rigid politicized gender roles not only contribute to military constructions, but constitute its literal foundation was a connection never made before. Suttner believed that women were just as ethically responsible and able as men. She never used her gender as an excuse for passivity. Her call for peace was rather directed to all mankind. Although she worked with the suffragette movement, she was very independent and primarily dedicated to the peace movement that focused on both genders. This vision of equality is what she projects in the novel. Although the novel focuses on Martha's development toward pacifism, it shows how men, such as Friedrich, can be equally peaceloving. Suttner rejects essentialization and therefore distances herself from the tendency in feminism to focus and justify merely the female sex. Suttner instead proposes change that will benefit all. Martha's life suggests that not only must women become emancipated, but they must also develop equal relationships with the opposite sex through self-realization on an individual basis.

As this thesis has set out to show, Suttner achieved her goal to write a book about peace that would touch a broad audience. Not only did the romantic novel's form allow an emotional approach, but the classic rhetorical structures of the text made the novel's political statement legitimate. Die Waffen nieder's synthesis of form and style epitomize Suttner's belief in feminine political potential and responsibility.

The novel demonstrates how women can effectively mobilize their resources in order to have their voices heard. It was remarkable for a romance novel to have such a broad societal impact. In 1890 the Austrian Minister of Finance referred to the novel in the *Viennese Reichsrat*. He stated: „Es hat ja neulich eine deutsche Frau in erschütterndster Weise den Krieg geschildert. Ich bitte Sie, einige Stunden diesem Werk zu widmen; wer dann noch Passion für den Krieg hat, den kann ich nur bedauern“ (qtd. in Katscher 43). Martha's biography demonstrates that women were capable of bringing about change. In this way, the novel was an important step forward not only for peace but also for women.

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