War and Literary Studies poses two main questions: First, how has war shaped the field of literary studies? And second, when scholars today study the literature of war what are the key concepts in play? Seeking to complement the extant scholarship, this volume adopts a wider and more systematic approach as it directs our attention to the relation between warfare and literary studies as a field of knowledge. What are the key characteristics of the language of war? Of gender in war? Which questions are central to the way we engage with war and trauma or war and sensation? In which ways were prominent twentieth-century theories such as critical theory, French postwar theory, and postcolonial theory shaped by war? How might emergent concepts such as “revolution,” “the Anthropocene,” or “capitalism” inflect the study of war and literature?

Anders Engberg-Pedersen is Professor of Comparative Literature at the University of Southern Denmark. He is the author of two monographs, Empire of Chance: The Napoleonic Wars and the Disorder of Things (2015) and Martial Aesthetics: How War Became an Art Form (forthcoming 2023). He edits the book series Prisms: Humanities and War.

Neil Ramsey is a senior lecturer in English at the University of New South Wales, Canberra. He is author of two monographs, The Military Memoir and Romantic Literary Culture, 1780–1835 (2011) and Romanticism and the Biopolitics of Modern War Writing (forthcoming with Cambridge University Press, 2022).
CAMBRIDGE CRITICAL CONCEPTS

Cambridge Critical Concepts focuses on the important ideas animating twentieth- and twenty-first-century literary studies. Each concept addressed in the series has had a profound impact on literary studies, as well as on other disciplines, and already has a substantial critical bibliography surrounding it. This series captures the dynamic critical energies transmitted across twentieth- and twenty-first-century literary landscapes: the concepts critics bring to reading, interpretation and criticism. By addressing the origins, development and application of these ideas, the books collate and clarify how these particular concepts have developed, while also featuring fresh insights and establishing new lines of enquiry.

Cambridge Critical Concepts shifts the focus from period- or genre-based literary studies of key terms to the history and development of the terms themselves. Broad and detailed contributions cumulatively identify and investigate the various historical and cultural catalysts that made these critical concepts emerge as established twenty-first-century landmarks in the discipline. The level will be suitable for advanced undergraduates, graduates and specialists, as well as for those teaching outside their own research areas, and will have cross-disciplinary relevance for subjects such as history and philosophy.

Titles in the Series

Law and Literature
Edited by Kieran Dolin
University of Western Australia

Time and Literature
Edited by Thomas M. Allen
University of Ottawa

The Global South and Literature
Edited by Russell West-Pavlov
University of Tübingen

Trauma and Literature
Edited by Roger Kurtz
The College at Brockport, State University of New York

Food and Literature
Edited by Gitanjali Shahani
San Francisco State University

Animals, Animality, and Literature
Edited by Bruce Boehrner, Molly Hand and Brian Massumi
Florida State University, University of Montreal
Terrorism and Literature
Edited by Peter Herman
San Diego State University

Climate and Literature
Edited by Adeline Johns
University of Surrey

Orientalism and Literature
Edited by Geoffrey Nash
SOAS, University of London

Decadence and Literature
Edited by Jane Desmarais and David Weir
Goldsmiths, University of London and Hunter College

Affect and Literature
Edited by Alex Houen
University of Cambridge

Sound and Literature
Edited by Anna Snaith
King’s College London

Magical Realism and Literature
Edited by Christopher Warnes and Kim Anderson Sasser
University of Cambridge and Wheaton College, Illinois

Surrealism
Edited by Natalya Lusty
University of Melbourne

Globalisation and Literary Studies
Edited by Joel Evans
University of Nottingham

War and Literary Studies
Edited by Anders Engberg-Pedersen and Neil Ramsey
University of Southern Denmark and University of New South Wales, Canberra
WAR AND LITERARY STUDIES

EDITED BY
ANDERS ENGBERG-PEDERSEN
University of Southern Denmark

NEIL RAMSEY
University of New South Wales, Canberra
Contents

List of Figures  page ix
List of Contributors  x
Acknowledgments  xv

Introduction: War, Literature, and the History of Knowledge  1
Anders Engberg-Pedersen and Neil Ramsey

Part I Origins and Theories

1 War and Ancient Athens  21
   Edith Foster

2 War and Chinese Culture  36
   Huiwen Helen Zhang and Haun Saussy

3 War and Romantic Thought  48
   Wolf Kittler

4 War and Critical Theory  67
   Max Pensky

5 War and French Theory  85
   Anders Engberg-Pedersen

6 War and Media Studies  102
   Geoffrey Winthrop-Young

7 War and Postcolonial Studies  119
   Santanu Das

Part II Foundational Concepts

8 War and Language  139
   Nil Santiáñez
Contents

9 War and Aesthetics 153
   Paul Sheehan

10 War and Historicity 168
   Elisabeth Krimmer

11 War and Sensation 184
   Sarah Cole

12 War and Civilians 201
   Mark Rawlinson

13 War and Trauma 216
   Neil Ramsey and Anders Engberg-Pedersen

14 War and Religion 230
   Peter Madsen

15 War and Gender 244
   Margot Norris

PART III EMERGING CONCEPTS

16 War and Drones 261
   Debjani Ganguly

17 War and Humanitarianism 278
   Eleni Coundouriotis

18 War and Capitalism 293
   Neil Ramsey

19 War and Revolution 307
   Jan Mieszkowski

20 War and Biopolitics 321
   Arne De Boever

21 War and Nuclear Criticism 336
   Adam Piette

22 War and the Personality of Power 352
   Brian Massumi

Index 370
Figures

7.1 Artefacts, including a pair of ‘blood-stained’ glasses belonging to Private Jogen (‘Jon’) Sen, the only soldier of colour at Leeds Pals Battalion, West Yorkshire Regiment, and killed in action on 22 May 1916 in France. Dupleix House and Museum, Chandernagore, West Bengal, India. page 123

7.2 An Indian sepoy getting his shave from the barber in France. © Imperial War Museum (Q004071). 124

7.3 Pen and ink drawings of Indian sepoys at rest by Paul Sarrut, a French liaison officer, from British and Indian Troops in Northern France – 70 Sketches, 1914–1915. 125
Contributors

Arne De Boever teaches American studies in the School of Critical Studies at the California Institute of the Arts, where he also directs the MA Aesthetics and Politics program. He is the author of States of Exception in the Contemporary Novel (Continuum, 2012), Narrative Care (Bloomsbury, 2013), Plastic Sovereignties (Edinburgh University Press, 2016), Finance Fictions (Fordham University Press, 2018), and Against Aesthetic Exceptionalism (University of Minnesota Press, 2019). His most recent book is François Jullien’s Unexceptional Thought (Rowman & Littlefield, 2020).

Sarah Cole is Parr Professor of English and Comparative Literature and Dean of Humanities at Columbia University. A scholar of modernism with interests in war, violence, and futurity, she is the author of three monographs, Inventing Tomorrow: H. G. Wells and the Twentieth Century (Columbia University Press, 2020), At the Violet Hour: Modernism and Violence in England and Ireland (Oxford University Press, 2012), and Modernism, Male Friendship, and the First World War (Cambridge University Press, 2003).

Eleni Coundouriotis is Professor of English and Comparative Literary and Cultural Studies at University of Connecticut. Her work focuses on human rights and postcolonial studies, with particular focus on historical narration. She is the author of Claiming History: Colonialism, Ethnography and the Novel (Columbia University Press, 1999), The People’s Right to the Novel: War Fiction in the Postcolony (Fordham University Press, 2014), and Narrating Human Rights in Africa (Routledge, 2021).

Santanu Das is Professor of English and Senior Research Fellow at All Souls College, University of Oxford. He is the author of two award-winning monographs – Touch and Intimacy in First World War Literature
List of Contributors


Edith Foster is a lecturer in ancient Greek at the College of Wooster. She works on ancient Greek prose writers, primarily historiography. Among other works, she has published the monograph Thucydides, Pericles, and Periclean Imperialism (Cambridge University Press, 2010) and coedited the volumes Thucydides and Herodotus (Oxford University Press, 2012) and The Oxford Handbook of Thucydides (2017). She is currently composing a commentary on book four of Thucydides for the Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics series of Cambridge University Press.

Debjani Ganguly is Professor of English and Director of the Institute of the Humanities and Global Cultures at the University of Virginia. She has written widely on global literatures about the Palestinian crisis, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Kashmir conflict, post-9/11 America, and the Rwanda genocide. Her most recent monograph is titled This Thing Called the World: The Contemporary Novel as Global Form (Duke University Press, 2016). She is currently working on a book titled Catastrophic Modes and Planetary Realism and is the editor of the two-volume The Cambridge History of World Literature (2021).

Wolf Kittler is Professor of Germanic, Slavic and Semitic Studies, and Comparative Literature at the University of California, Santa Barbara. His research focuses on Western literature from Greek antiquity to the present, philosophy, art history, history of science, and media technology. He has published numerous articles on occidental literature and on the history of science and media, and he is currently working on a book project titled On Wings of Light. A Cultural History of Telecommunication.
List of Contributors

Elisabeth Krimmer is Professor of German Studies at the University of California, Davis. She is the author of In the Company of Men: Cross-Dressed Women around 1800 (Wayne State Press, 2004), The Representation of War in German Literature from 1800 to the Present (Cambridge University Press, 2010), and German Women’s Life Writing and the Holocaust: Complicity and Gender in the Second World War as well as the coeditor of Enlightened War: Theories and Cultures of Warfare in Eighteenth Century Germany (Camden House, 2011).

Peter Madsen is Professor Emeritus of Comparative Literature at the University of Copenhagen. His most recent research focuses on the role of Islamic culture in European literature. Publications on this subject include the edition of and introduction to a special issue of the Nordic Journal of Renaissance Studies titled Framing “Turks”: Representations of Ottomans and Moors in Continental European Literature, 1453–1683 (2019).


Jan Mieszkowski is the Reginald F. Arragon Professor of German and Humanities at Reed College. He is a specialist in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European literature and philosophy and has published extensively on war and culture, including the monograph Watching War (Stanford University Press, 2012). His most recent book is Crises of the Sentence (University of Chicago Press, 2019).

Margot Norris is a retired Chancellor’s Professor of English and Comparative Literature at the University of California, Irvine. She is a renowned scholar on the work of James Joyce, as well as on other twentieth-century Modernist literature. In addition, she has written extensively on modernism and war, and is the author of Writing War in the Twentieth Century (University Press of Virginia, 2000).

Max Pensky is Professor of Philosophy at Binghamton University. He has written widely on critical theory, genocide studies, and transitional...

**Adam Piette** is Professor of Modern Literature at the University of Sheffield. He has worked extensively on literature of the Second World War and the Cold War. His monographs include *The Literary Cold War, 1945 to Vietnam* (Edinburgh University Press, 2009) and *Imagination at War* (Macmillan, 1995) on fiction and poetry of the Second World War. He coedited *The Edinburgh Companion to Twentieth-Century British and American War Literature* with Mark Rawlinson.

**Neil Ramsey** is a senior lecturer in English at the University of New South Wales, Canberra. He is author of two monographs, *The Military Memoir and Romantic Literary Culture, 1780–1835* (Ashgate, 2011) and *Romanticism and the Biopolitics of Modern War Writing* (Cambridge University Press, forthcoming 2022), and the coeditor of *Tracing War in British Enlightenment and Romantic Culture* (Palgrave, 2015).

**Mark Rawlinson** is Professor of English Literature at the University of Leicester. His research has a particular focus on the literature of war in the twentieth century. Among others, his books include *British Writing of the Second World War* (Oxford University Press, 2000) and a coedited collection, with Adam Piette, *The Edinburgh Companion to Twentieth-Century British and American War Literature* (Edinburgh University Press, 2012).

**Nil Santiáñez** is Professor of Spanish in the Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures at Saint Louis University. He has authored, among other books, *The Literature of Absolute War: Transnationalism and World War II* (Cambridge University Press, 2020), *Del mal y sus signaturas* (Alpha Decay, 2020), *Wittgenstein’s Ethics and Modern Warfare* (Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2018), and *Topographies of Fascism: Habitus, Space, and Writing in Twentieth-Century Spain* (University of Toronto Press, 2013). His research interests encompass the study of warfare and culture, contemporary biopolitics, necropolitics, fascism, cultural geography, and political philosophy.

**Haun Saussy** is University Professor in East Asian Languages and Civilizations at the University of Chicago and former President of the...
ACLA. His pursuit of China studies in a rhetorical and poetic framework may be observed in *The Problem of a Chinese Aesthetic* (Stanford University Press, 1993), *Great Walls of Discourse and Other Adventures in Cultural China* (Harvard University Asia Center, 2001), *Translation as Citation: Zhuangzi Inside Out* (Oxford University Press, 2017), and *The Making of Barbarians* (Princeton University Press, 2021).

**Paul Sheehan** is Associate Professor of English at Macquarie University, Sydney. He is the author of *Modernism and the Aesthetics of Violence* (Cambridge University Press, 2013) and the coeditor of “The Literary Image: Film, History, Theory” (2021), a special issue of *Textual Practice*. Most recently, he has published essays on Don DeLillo, J. M. Coetzee, and Marcel Proust.

**Geoffrey Winthrop-Young** is a professor in the Department of Central, Eastern and Northern European Studies at the University of British Columbia. He has published widely on the intersection of media theory, theories of evolution and extinction, and cultural techniques. His publications include *Friedrich Kittler zur Einführung* (Junius, 2005) and *Kittler and the Media* (Polity Press, 2011) as well as numerous articles and edited volumes.

Acknowledgments

The idea for this book was conceived before anyone had an inkling that a pandemic might up-end lives around the globe. The essays, however, were written in the midst of all the tribulations and ordeals that followed on the heels of the virus. We would therefore first and foremost like to thank all the individual authors for taking the time to write the essays that together comprise this volume. In the same breath, we would like to extend our gratitude to Ray Ryan and Edgar Mendez at Cambridge University Press for their enthusiasm for the project, and for their enduring patience and strong support throughout the process. A special thanks is owed Christine Strandmose Toft for her superhuman efforts in bringing the manuscript into shape. The project has been generously supported by the Carlsberg Foundation and the Velux Foundations.