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The Great War Against the Real: Representations of Depersonalization and Derealization in
World War One

By

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Abstract

This study, *The Great War Against the Real: Representations of Depersonalization and Derealization in World War One*, examines amputation, prosthetics, and disfigurement. It is centered on how traumatic injuries are linked to altered states of consciousness on and off the battlefield. Drawing on literature, philosophy, psychology, and history, I investigate how depersonalization and derealization emerge not only as medical or psychological phenomena but also as recurring aesthetic and conceptual motifs in cultural representations of the First World War. I use the terms depersonalization and derealization to interpret moments of the war that are represented as dreamlike, robotic, or otherwise dissociated from sentiments of reality.

The first chapter provides a theoretical framework for depersonalization and derealization through philosophers such as Merleau-Ponty, Sartre, Apter, and Trigg, before applying these concepts to historical and literary accounts of amputation. I pay particular attention to the comparison between the phantom limb and the depersonalized body, raising the question of the difference between flesh and a mere thing. The second chapter shifts focus to amputators, highlighting how both surgeons and soldiers enact ruptures in identity that estrange the self from its identity. Here, I highlight the interpretive difference between amputation carried out by soldiers versus surgeons, emphasizing the nuances of agency, violence, and dissociation as a defense mechanism.

The third chapter turns to prosthetics. I lay out three major types of prosthetics and demonstrate how each figured into the war. The chapter foregrounds a prosthetic leg advertisement taken from a journal written for injured veterans. Additionally, I analyze how rehabilitation bound soldiers were equipped with specifically tailored prosthetics that enabled them to work in factories, which underscores the economic mechanism through which these mass casualties were made possible. The final chapter considers facial disfigurement. I take care to discuss the importance of the face and how the face, apart from disfiguration, is implicated in episodes of depersonalization and derealization. I continue by linking philosophical definitions of plasticity with photographs and literature that register the profound social, medical, and cultural ruptures created by facial wounds. My major concern of the chapter is whether or not Levinas's philosophy of the face as a first philosophy or ethics holds when the subject experiences their own face as Other, as occurs in depersonalization and derealization.

Introduction : Blueprints of the Depersonalized Body

The Spirit of Fracture

Periods of substantial change are marked as much by divergence as they are by convergence. The Great War of 1914 was a time of unprecedented social and technological convergence, as well as a period of unseen divergence from past norms. Industrialization permanently changed warfare, and the portents were numerous: the Russo-Japanese War, the First and Second Balkan Wars, the Crimean War, the Austro-Sardinian War, and the American Civil War. Undoubtedly, industrialization, a socio-technical process, increased the capacity to decimate belligerents, but none of these previously mentioned conflicts did as much as the First World War to alter how society and the individual understood warfare.

This dissertation argues that this alteration to the understanding of warfare implicates a fundamental spirit of fracture—a radical divergence in how the modern subject experiences reality. As industrialization was responsible for the acceleration of destructive capacities, it simultaneously triggered a deeper psychological divergence: the state of depersonalization, where the individual feels detached from their own body and surroundings. I argue that this sense of *unreality* is not merely a clinical symptom but a defining cultural motif that is essential for understanding the philosophical legacy of the Great War. My research is fundamentally interested in divergence, understood as “dis-,” apart or asunder, and “vegere,” to turn, bend or incline. And, it is for good reason that divergence is the focal point, because the beginning of the twentieth century is heavily marked by a spirit of fracture, manifested physically by the uncountable number of amputees and amputators the Great War produced. However, physical

dismemberment represents only a portion of divergence in this time period, for soldiers also experienced divergent subjective conceptions of reality, especially in regard to the body.

In order to explore the spirit of fracture at the beginning of the twentieth century, I divide this work into four chapters. The first two chapters explore the physical manifestations of this fracture, focusing on the traumatic divergence of flesh from the body in the form of amputation (chapter one) and the technical and psychological roles of those charged with performing them, amputators (chapter two). The third chapter turns toward prosthetics, the technical mediations through rehabilitated soldiers often adopted to bridge this fracture and navigate their reintegration back into society. The fourth chapter examines facial injuries, representing the social/symbolic stakes of war injuries in an exceptional manner; these injuries evoke philosophical currents that deeply question the divide between object and subject. In what remains of the introduction, I take care to define what I intend by the spirit of fracture and how depersonalization fits into this discourse by laying out the historical context, the corpus, and operational terms of this research.

Spirit is a charged term, although an appropriate one. I partially intend spirit to be understood as the translation of Hegel's notion of *Geist*, where there is an attempt to reconcile the objective with the subjective. For Hegel *Geist* expresses how the universal can be taken into the individual and how the dialectic between the two unfolds. In this we can follow how sociologist Anthony King understands Hegel's use of the word *Geist*, "It [*Geist*] is the self-determination of the ego, which means that at one and the same time the ego posits itself as its own negative, i.e., as restricted and determinate, and yet remains in itself identity and universality" (King 103). In a perfunctory summation of this term, we could state that *Geist* represents the capacity of the individual to interface with a collective consciousness, and

explains the play between the two aspects of being (as an individual and as part of a collective). I will highlight numerous powerful examples of how the *Geist* of fracture can be seen within the context of World War One, always shifting between the subjective and the objective, between the universal and the individual, and most notably—between the real and the unreal.

Real is also a charged term, and a potentially misleading one. I intend the term real to be understood in terms of a relationship between an individual and their body, allowing room for varying degrees of “reality” in relation to the body. Another way of stating this is that I intend the term *real* to be understood within the context of depersonalization. As a dissociative disorder, depersonalization is a condition that alters an individual's sense of reality, especially the sense of reality of their body. Daphne Simone, MD, in her work *Feeling Unreal*, describes how people suffering from depersonalization, “the world within, or the world around, may seem strange and unreal for prolonged periods of time. They feel detached from the sense of self they once took for granted and struggle, often for many years, in fruitless searches for answers that are hard to come by” (Simone 3). Some individuals never recover from these moments of depersonalization, or derealization (a term used to describe the unreality of the environment), and it becomes a disorder. However, it is not my aim to make a clinical case for the veterans of World War One having such a disorder, rather I point to the experience as an underlying mechanism that is possible for anyone under duress. The sentiment of unreality experienced in depersonalization is the fuel that will push this investigation forward.

World War One provides a conducive context for the study of depersonalization, because depersonalization is a defense mechanism¹ that guards from trauma, “Everyone feels ‘unreal’

¹ Freud is the author credited with the defense mechanism theory in regard to depersonalization. A 1936 correspondence between Sigmund Freud and Romain Rolland details his first experience of depersonalization, in a letter published under the name *A Disturbance of Memory*. In this letter, we are told that Sigmund Freud experienced it when he visited the acropolis for the first time. He refers to a dissociative state that he calls depersonalization and derealization in order to

from time to time. It may happen after a traumatic event, while in new or foreign surroundings, or in times of severe stress. As a defense mechanism, depersonalization serves a purpose—to mentally distance an individual from horrific or overwhelming circumstances” (Simone 3). A study of depersonalization is drawn toward a situation in which individuals were surrounded by traumatic events, were in new or foreign surroundings, or encountered times of severe stress; each of these factors was an everyday occurrence in the First World War. The most pervasive forms of trauma that lend evidence to moments of depersonalized experience are amputation, disfigurement, and prosthetics. An ocean of nuance exists between each account of amputation and disfigurement, as well as between each representation of these divergences from a “normal body.” Bringing an interpretative lens to these experiences and representations is key to drawing out the more philosophically charged elements.

2. The Great War

Countless books and essays have been written on World War One, so there is a wealth of knowledge to draw from. There were several “global” conflicts that preceded World War one. Hamilton et al, state it could actually be considered the eighth world war to date, but it remains unique not only due its scale, but also to the elusiveness of its causes:

Of the eight wars, World War I poses the most serious challenges with regard to explanation. The heir presumptive to the Austro-Hungarian throne was assassinated on 28

June 1914. The Austrian government alleged official Serb involvement, issued an

expand on this notion of ‘unreality.’ Sigmund Freud implies that depersonalization and derealization are effectively defense mechanisms against trauma experienced by the mind. He sees the mind as being overburdened by nerves and, therefore, it shuts down certain parts in order to better cope with stress. The shock of this overstimulus then caused him feelings of unreality that he later described in a letter, “These phenomena are to be observed in two forms: the subject feels either that a piece of reality or that a piece of his own self is strange to him. In the latter case we speak of “depersonalization.””

ultimatum, and, rejecting negotiation, began hostilities with a bombardment of Belgrade.

In a linked series of decisions, four other major powers – Russia, Germany, France, and Britain – joined the struggle. (Hamilton 10)

While not unique in its global implications, it was unique in its circumstances. The assassination of Archduke Ferdinand is the commonly accepted impetus for the war, authors continue to debate the causes, making it much less clear cut than casual explanations lead us to believe. Hamilton et al, break down the causes into two groups: big events and small events. Big events are represented by big picture sorts of ideas, “Most university-level history and social science courses reviewing the causes of the war focus on “big” events, processes, or structures. Most accounts of the war’s origins begin with the alliance system and continue with discussions of nationalism, imperialism, and militarism” (Hamilton 11). On the other hand, small events include, “Accounts focused on individuals – on Emperor Franz Joseph, Kaiser Wilhelm II, or Tsar Nicholas II” (Hamilton 15), and while they do not factor as heavily into general explanations of World War One, they are still insightful.

Considering that depersonalization is a subjective phenomenon, it makes sense to shift focus toward the small events, indeed toward even smaller events than the whims and fancies of world leaders. In this regard, it is a kind of history from below, where the individuals who are far removed from important positions of power become the focus of the history. This study is in part a history of World War One told from the point of view of those in the trenches, the casualty clearing stations, the rehabilitation centers, and the public sphere. Not only is it a study focused on small events, it is also a history that is further restricted in its scope, as it focuses on soldiers that reported instances of depersonalization. The specificity of this study notwithstanding, the importance of big events cannot be completely ignored; it is crucial to acknowledge the flux

between the small events and the larger events, and how the two of them work together in the concert of the spirit of fracture.

Christopher Clark, professor of history, presents an interesting proposal regarding the cause of the war. He states that the great powers of the twentieth century “sleepwalked” into the First World War. The parallel between sleepwalking and a depersonalized state is uncanny, because oftentimes the sentiment of unreality that accompanies depersonalization can feel like a dream. In a first person account, Joseph Shay describes, “None of this is real! I am dreaming ... I’m not really driving! I’m not in control of anything ! I am an automaton!” (Tanaka 243). Depersonalization, in this specific account as in many other accounts, puts the notion of reality into question while also pitting it against a sense of agency. For the case of Clark, we can see how this small event of an individual feeling unreal along with a distinct lack of autonomy can be mapped onto a big event, in other words, how nations could sleepwalk into global conflict. Clark makes an allusion to the French as sleepwalkers. The French were aware of the destructive force of their arms but never took meaningful steps to mitigate the possible calamity they could lead to, instead preferring to claim that they needed the weapons as a deterrent. Additionally, the French decided to commend themselves that they were able to successfully intervene medically to repair the injuries caused by their weapons. From this point, Clark draws the conclusion that the major and minor actors of the First World War were sleepwalking toward the largest global catastrophe the world had ever known up to this point, “In this sense, the protagonists of 1914 were sleepwalkers, watchful but unseeing, haunted by dreams, yet blind to the reality of the horror they were about to bring into the world” (Clark 562). It is in this sense that we can see the interplay between the universal and the particular; it is in this sense that the spirit of fracture shows its face in more ways than just the broken and battered bodies left behind after the war.

The dissociation between individual actors and the rapidly advancing technologies that created an institutional means of mass destruction is clear.

World War One, therefore, provides a rich context in which a study of dissociation can take root. Through an interweaving of big and small events, it becomes clear that divergence, or fracture, or any word denoting separation, is at the heart of this period of time. While I focus on individual accounts of trauma as a primary source of evidence for depersonalization, I also call upon large events and institutions to highlight the impact of depersonalization.

3. Representing the Depersonalized

The materials that I have selected can be organized into two categories: creative and interpretive. The creative materials are literature, paintings, sculpture, and various other media, while the interpretative materials are essays, books, and articles, mostly within the domains of psychology, history and philosophy. As most of the creative materials directly speak on the topic of World War One, I use them to anchor the work within the context. The interpretative materials vary in terms of direct relationship to the time period; these materials are referenced to bolster themes of depersonalization, as well as other themes. Consequently, they are not married to the context of World War One, though they do remain highly relevant.

3.1. Artists

The Cubist movement, which is known for its fragmented aesthetic, calls to mind a spirit of fracture. Predating the First World War, Pablo Picasso, a prominent Cubist, created his work *Guitar and Wine Glass* (1912). The work is done in the collage style, meaning that it is composed of cut-outs from different images and materials. This work depicts exactly what the

title proposes: the shape of a guitar is suggested by the wood grain cut out for its body, the blue trapezium hints at a neck, a white circle as a soundhole, and a black half circle as the bridge. However, having nothing to do with the anatomy of a guitar, there is a clipping in the bottom left corner that reads *la bataille s'est engagé(...)*, blending together the spirit of fracture through the art style and warfare in the news. It is worth noting that the newspaper clipping itself is amputated to a certain degree, *la bataille* or 'the battle' in French is a feminine noun, and the auxiliary verb of *être* requires agreement with the noun, therefore it follows that the past participle that follows it must be feminine as well, which is indicated by adding an extra 'e.' The clipping represents a truncated form of the entire newspaper, but also more subtly implies a type of amputation of grammar, doubling the senses and meaning hidden with the artwork.

Objects such as a guitar were not the sole focus of the Cubists; they also considered the human subject and fractured it in the same way. In a similar way, German artist Otto Dix chose to directly represent wounded war veterans of the First World War. Dix incorporated elements of Cubism into his artistic style, depicting subjects through a collage art form, such as we see in *Skat Players*; a work depicting mutilated veterans sitting down to play cards despite their missing limbs and cumbersome prosthetics. Although it is a grotesque representation, *Skat Players* (1920) offers a remarkably limpid representation of the human figure, despite the injuries and prosthetics. Raymond Duchamp-Villon, on the other hand, pushed the limits of representation of the human body to conceptual limits. In the medium of sculpture, Duchamp-Villon crafted representations, of the head in particular, which relied on essential shapes and forms of the head in order for it to be identified as such. His work, such as *Tête du professeur Gosset* (1917), calls to mind the structure of a head without clearly reproducing key features of a head or face as such, for instance there are no discernable mouth, eyes, cheeks, or

nose; instead, there are spaces that merely suggest a face. The work of Duchamp-Villon in particular, calls into question the perplexing problem of what constitutes a face. Moreover, it asks us to define the role of the face, especially in light of the revolutionary medical practice of reconstructive plastic surgery.

While it is useful to study artistic production contemporaneous to the First World War, more recent artistic expressions concerning the conflict provide a necessary retrospective illumination of the spirit of fracture. These works allow us to see how the subjective trauma of the past has calcified into a collective cultural memory. Kader Attia, for example, held an exhibition in 2013 entitled *Continuum of Repair: the Light of Jacob's Ladder*, which highlighted injury and repair embedded within cultural contexts. The disfigured soldiers of World War One figure heavily in the work. They represent a continuum of repair, meaning that the act of repairing is an evolving and ongoing action, rather than one with a definitive end. Attia juxtaposes images of facial disfigurement with African fetish masks, and visually they share similarities in their representation of injured facial structures, whether this was the intent of the image or not. Therefore, Attia's work represents physical divergence as well as the larger fold of cultural divergence. It is a marvelous example of how repair is not merely part of a continuum, but also how the injuries themselves are part of a continuum that outstrips the purview of the individual that can be contemplated in the collective. The retrospective critique of the First World War brings interesting questions to the front that quite simply could not have been asked during the time period, such as considerations of the impact of colonization on the history of World War One. For instance, the retrospective critique of WWI permits a study of the neglected history of the *tirailleurs*—who in their own right have many connections to a history that suffers

from divergence or amputation. Many artists have been inspired to cast an eye backwards towards the events of World War One, not only in the visual arts, but also in literature.

3.2. Writers

For the purposes for this study, I have selected two works that were written long after the events of the First World War as well as four works that were created within the time period between the beginning of World War One and the end of World War Two (with the exception of one work published one year after V-E day). In total, these represent the work of four authors. Marc Dugain and David Diop are authors that wrote about the Great War nearly a century after the fact: *La Chambre des officiers* (Dugain) in 1998 and *Frère d'âme* (Diop) in 2018. Closer to the events are the writings of Blaise Cendrars, a Swiss author and veteran of the war, who wrote three of the works : *J'ai tué* (1918), *J'ai saigné* (1938), and *La Main coupée* (1946). Additionally, in terms of work situated within the time period, *Les Hommes sans visages* by pseudonymous author Henriette Rémi is an autobiographical work of a nurse working with the war wounded in 1942, although published in 2014. Despite the chronological gap between their publication dates, each work illuminates problems surrounding identity, self, and fracture.

The facial disfigurement of a young French officer is the primary intrigue of Marc Dugain's *La Chambre des officiers*. The work was undertaken by Dugain to commemorate his grandfather, who was a facially disfigured veteran of World War One. Dugain, in an interview with the prefect of Paris, Jean Daubigny, details his relationship with his grandfather and his comrades, "...Mon grand père était défiguré et nous étions toutes les vacances, absolument toutes les vacances scolaires, c'est-a-dire Noel, Paques, tout ça, les grandes vacances, au milieu des gueules cassées et donc j'ai vécu toute cette enfance au milieu de ces hommes et ses femmes,

même si elles étaient moins nombreuses, défigurées qui a retrouvé un refuge dans ces deux châteaux de gueules cassées....”(Centenaire de la 1ère Guerre mondiale 1:12-1:35). He goes on to state in the interview that he never meant for the book to be published. Instead he wrote it for his grandmother and for his children to honor the life of his grandfather. It would go on to be published and win eighteen literary prizes. Dugain was understandably marked by these experiences from his childhood. He also admits that he was psychologically troubled by his exposure to disfigurement, “...c’est vrai que cette défiguration m’a beaucoup marqué parce que quand j’étais enfant j’étais soigné pour les légers troubles psychologiques parce que je passais mon temps à me regarder dans une glace pour voir si mon visage était toujours là...” (Centenaire de la 1ère Guerre mondiale 3:07-3:18). The experience of Dugain highlights the permeability of the challenges disfigurement poses not only for the individuals, but for those who interact with them and society at large. This is a finding that is not only suggested by the experience of the author but also supported by larger considerations as well. The work of Dugain is a retroactive look at past events. Simultaneously, it is a work that helps process some of his own trauma: the act of writing helped Dugain understand how events in the past before he was born could still have an effect on him long after they had happened.

Much like Dugain, David Diop writes retroactively about the First World War, although for different reasons. *Frère d’âme* is the story of Alfa and Mademba, two Senegalese riflemen, in the First World War. Alfa tragically loses his dearest friend, Mademba, as he is disemboweled in front of him. Alfa’s subjectivity is deeply troubled by the loss. He slowly loses his sense of self all while brutally dismembering German soldiers and bringing their severed hands back to the trench with him. Diop’s work highlights how moments of depersonalization are not unique to the injured, but also part of the experience of those who gravely injure their supposed enemy. Unlike

Dugain, Diop was not surrounded by injured veterans in his childhood, rather, Diop writes his work not for himself, but for an entire culture that is lacking representation within the literature. In an interview by *La Grande Librairie* he directly expresses his desire to fill a historical void, for instance, when asked if he found any shocking letters from West African soldiers to inspire his work, “ Non, on les trouve pas parce que les tirailleurs sénégalais qui venaient de toute l’Afrique de l’ouest, il y avait le Niger, le Sénégal, le Mali, eh bien, en effet, viennent d’une civilisation où l’orale supplante l’écrit...” (2:17-2:32). To a degree, the history of the Senegalese riflemen in World War One is depersonalized from the riflemen themselves, as there is little to no record of them recording their own experiences of the war. Diop’s work raises important questions in regard to what the recording of history means for a collectivity. Additionally, it brings questions between violence and identity to the forefront, pushing the boundaries between self and other.

Diop and Dugain each created a narrator who either physically injured an enemy or was injured by one, but neither is both amputator and amputee. However, Swiss author Blaise Cendrars is an example of both the aggressor and the victim. He lost his arm in 1915 due to machine gun fire, but not before having killed a German soldier, at least this is what his novel *J’ai tué* suggests. The duality of being victim and aggressor unfurls over three novels: the aforementioned *J’ai tué*, which speaks to his experience as a ‘victorious’ combatant; the works *J’ai saigné* and *La Main coupée* recount the loss of his right arm during the war. Questions of identity, objectivity and unreality tie these works together. In fact, it appears that identity is a theme that permeated other works of Cendrars. According to Elena Gualtieri, this is a topic that shows up in his collection of poems *Kodak*, where Cendrars lets, “the inner, subjective world be absorbed by the exterior, the ‘I’ reduced finally to just eyes” (Gualtieri 188). The loss of

subjectivity, or the narrative ‘I,’ being reduced to ‘just eyes’ allows objects to speak for themselves. This technique evokes moments of depersonalization, while also hinting at difficult philosophical questions surrounding what it means to let objects ‘speak.’ Similar moments pierce through his writings on the war, as pointed out by Elodie Galinat when in *J’ai saigné Cendrars* seemingly disregards the identity of someone handing him a bottle of cognac:

Cendrars ne voit pas le visage de celui qui lui tend la bouteille et cela semble lui importer peu, il ne mentionne qu’un bras. Un bras sans corps, sans traits précis, vide de toute substance, sans identité, perdu dans la foule, simplement là pour lui tendre cet alcool, sans le toucher ni même l’effleurer, dans un élan du corps quelque peu artificiel, maladroit. (Galinat 8)

Galinat makes two points here that are deeply interesting to my study of depersonalization in World War One: first, the lack of identity attributed to others, indicated by the morcellation of the body of others; second, the reference to bodies appearing artificial and awkward, clearly belonging to a register in a study of depersonalization where the unreal or artificial takes precedence. Fleshing out similar instances throughout Cendrars’ works drives deeper into the appearance of unreality. His work is an example that highlights the duality of an aggressor and victim. The uniqueness of this complex explains why he figures so heavily into the present study.

Henriette Rémi (pseudonym of Henriette Wille), a nurse during the conflict, documented her experiences of the war in her work *Les Hommes sans visages*. Her story takes us away from the front and into a facial injury recovery ward, but instead of a soldier’s perspective this novel offers the point of view of a health professional. The text recounts many challenges that Henriette must face in treating the facially wounded. Unlike the challenges of the surgeon, who was trying to develop new methods of treatment to save soldiers’ lives, Henriette relates her

experience as being a morally difficult one. This is due in part to the fact that she finds it difficult to see the injuries herself and is unsure how to treat the injured men she is charged with caring for. Henriette Rémi witnesses states of depersonalization around her, even if she does not point them out as such. What makes her testimony unique is that she is neither a combatant nor a wounded veteran herself, making her work representative of the far reaching impacts of these injuries.

3.3. Intellectuals

Saying that my work relies heavily on phenomenological philosophy is an understatement, though it is not limited to it. The theoretical background for my work is composed entirely of continental thinkers, some appearing more prominently than others. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Emmanuel Levinas, and Theodor Adorno are the three philosophers I draw from the most frequently to illuminate the philosophical nature of depersonalization. I find that Merleau-Ponty's works *Le Visible et l'invisible* along with *Phénoménologie de la perception* provide a strong foundation for exploring the relationship between consciousness and embodiment. Levinas is likewise useful for exploring this relationship, while at the same time his works add the topic of the face as a distinct element. I turn to many of Levinas's texts, but *Totalité et infini* is without a doubt the most relevant text for my concerns. Adorno's *Negative Dialectics* is useful insofar as it clarifies how individuals can conceive of themselves as both simultaneously a subject and an object. The philosophical evidence that Adorno provides is key to highlighting a peculiar facet of depersonalization where a subject will describe the 'thingness' of their body while maintaining a firm grip on their subjectivity.

None of these philosophers were active during the First World War, as a matter of fact they were all born just before or around the start of the war. Each of them was influenced by the founder of phenomenology, Edmund Husserl, who was profoundly affected by the war. As Dan Zahavi points out, Husserl lost his youngest son to the conflict causing him to turn toward more existential themes in his philosophy (Zahavi, section 7). These existential themes are more pronounced, in my opinion, in the philosophy of Levinas, who focused on the term ‘ethics,’ and which I elaborate in the fourth chapter. While I do not cite Husserl directly, his influence on the philosophy that I use cannot be overstated; additionally, it offers a small connection between the First World War and the thinkers I have chosen to analyze it.

In the realm of psychology, I borrow from the work of Sigmund Freud and Oliver Sacks. Additionally, I call on art historians and cultural critics, such as Hal Foster and Allison Landsberg to analyze various representations of amputees and prosthetic limbs. Furthermore, medical professionals are of great importance to my work as well. If I were to highlight one individual in particular it would be the father of modern reconstructive plastic surgery, Sir Harold Gillies.

These authors and professionals provide direct evidence for the contexts I situate them in, while the philosophers provide a larger theoretical framework for understanding depersonalization outside the actual experience. However, the experience of depersonalization is a deeply important issue that I will develop further in order to clarify its meaning.

4. Depersonalization as Experience

I will highlight the high frequency of the experience of unreality within World War One. It would be redundant and time consuming to reiterate how each experience affirms itself as

depersonalization, especially given that the experience can take on so many different forms and intensities. Therefore, this section will outline the main aspects of depersonalization that are recurring in the work in order to give the reader a firmer grasp on what is most significant while trying to identify the experience of depersonalization.

Depersonalization, in general, is considered within the context of a psychological disorder. Specifically, it is a dissociative disorder. According to the DSM-5-TR the diagnostic criteria are: “experiences of unreality, detachment, or being an outside observer with respect to one’s thoughts, feelings, sensations, body, or actions (e.g., perceptual alterations, distorted sense of time, unreal or absent self, emotional and/or physical numbing)” (American Psychiatric Association). Directly following this description are the criteria for the diagnosis of derealization: “Experiences of unreality or detachment with respect to surroundings (e.g., individuals or objects are experienced as unreal, dreamlike, foggy, lifeless, or visually distorted)” (American Psychiatric Association), a separate but common experience in depersonalization. The experiences of depersonalization and derealization are linked very closely together, and I often do not make a distinction between the two of them throughout my work. The main difference is that depersonalization has to do with the body while derealization concerns the environment; it is a divide between exterior and interior, but ultimately they are inextricably linked. Given that I am not seeking to diagnose any individuals with a disorder, I see no need to differentiate between the two of them, but, rather I see them both as manifestations of two qualities: unreality and thingness. These categories contain subcategories that merit further exploration, however, these two aspects cover all of the descriptions that follow in this work.

4.1. Unreality

Unreality relies on metamorphosis or transformation of the sense of reality. A change as such can be found hiding in the language used to describe everyday experiences, oftentimes the descriptions will tend toward a lexicon that evokes the strange or alienated. The original use of the term depersonalization is credited to Swiss poet and philosopher Henri-Frédéric Amiel, who wrote in *The Journal Intime of Henri-Frédéric Amiel*:

My mind is the empty frame of a thousand vanished images. Sharpened by incessant training, it is all culture, but it has retained hardly anything in its meshes. It is without matter, and is only form. It no longer has knowledge; it has become method. It is etherealized, algebraicized. Life has treated it as death treats other minds; it has already prepared it for a further metamorphosis. Since the age of sixteen onward I have been able to look at things with the eyes of a blind man recently operated upon—that is to say, I have been able to suppress in myself the results of the long education of sight, and to abolish distances; and now I find myself regarding existence as though from beyond the tomb, from another world; all is strange to me; I am, as it were, outside my own body and individuality; I am *depersonalized*, detached, cut adrift. Is this madness? No. Madness means the impossibility of recovering one's normal balance after the mind has thus played truant among alien forms of being, and followed Dante to invisible worlds. Madness means incapacity for self-judgment and self-control. Whereas it seems to me that my mental transformations are but philosophical experiences. (Amiel; emphasis in original)

Amiel's description is the quintessential example of depersonalization and derealization. The subject of analysis is his mind, which indicates that he has established some distance between his

mind and his sense of self in order to question it—a hallmark of depersonalized experience. Additionally, he makes a reference to a distortion of his visual perception through the analogy of seeing the world as a blind man that was recently operated on. This evokes derealization. His description also contains several words that hint at strangeness and alienation: etherialized, metamorphosis, beyond the tomb, from another world, strange, depersonalized, detached, etc. Another piece of this description that makes it so rich for a study of depersonalization is that he qualifies his mental transformations as “philosophical experiences.” I contend that these philosophical experiences are of the ontological branch of philosophy, rather than epistemology or axiology. While he does not say it directly, Amiel is concerned with the experience of reality and what maintains it; he is not experiencing the foundation of knowledge, nor an ethic. Amiel’s concerns lie within the transformation of himself and his perception of his surroundings, or his reality experienced as unreal. However, in order to establish the unreal, one must first define the real.

Heidegger, who claims that the meaning of the real is tied up in the conditions of it being, something independent from us or as something that we are part of: “In so far as Reality has the character of something independent and ‘in itself’, the question of the meaning of ‘Reality’ becomes linked with that of whether the Real can be independent of consciousness’ or whether there can be a transcendence of consciousness into the ‘sphere’ of the Real” (Heidegger 246). For Heidegger there is no separation, it is as if we experience the world as a type of fabric of existence where we are both simultaneously the world and an individuated self-reflexive entity. The world discloses itself to us, and we are part of the world, so being is inescapably caught up in a process of revealing itself (the world) to itself (individual). Heidegger quotes Dilthey to understand how we come into contact with the real during this process of disclosure and through

which means the real is presented to us as such. The finding is that it is through resistance that we encounter the real: “He [Dilthey] holds that the Real gets experienced in impulse and will, and that Reality is resistance, or, more exactly, the character of resisting” (Heidegger 253). The resistance of our endeavours is therefore another way of saying reality, and, according to Heidegger, it is only through the world disclosing itself to us that we come up against resistance: “*The experiencing of resistance—that is, the discovery of what is resistant to one’s endeavours—is possible ontologically only by reason of the disclosedness of the world*” (Heidegger 253; no emphasis in original). So, it would appear that the real is an outcome of the disclosedness of the world coming up against our will and endeavours and, from this definition, it is a bit easier to touch on how we can interpret the unreal.

The unreal, for the purposes of my research, is not that which is purely fantasy or unexperienceable in the world, just as Amiel does not qualify his experience as madness by following Dante into invisible worlds. Rather, the unreal will refer to that which is not fully disclosed, that which keeps part of itself to itself, out of reach, where the will cannot venture to even do this work of ‘coming up against.’ This lines up well with the defense mechanism model where the will acts as a type of metaphor for a recalcitrance of the self and the will to engage with the real.

Throughout this study of the war, we will see precisely this, an inability to engage with the real, giving rise to a portrait of obscurity painted over the world where seemingly fantastic claims are made. The consistent experience of a will encountering resistance with the entities that populate our world creates the feeling of reality. This requires a disclosure of an entity's presence and engenders a familiarity with said entity. The unreal is found in the non-familiarity

of the disclosure of the object, and, because the subject and object should be reconciled, the same goes for subjects. Otherwise said, an individual may feel unreal to themselves.

The importance of familiarity in reality formation has been commented on by philosopher Jerome Dokic, he employs the word acquaintance with an object: “In experiencing an object, we may have the sense that we are *acquainted* with the object itself rather than a surrogate or representation of the object. Let us call this ‘the sense of acquaintance.’ The sense of acquaintance involves the sense that our experiential access to the perceptual object is *unmediated*. In ordinary perception, we have the sense that what we perceive is directly given to us, in flesh and blood so to speak” (Dokic 300). This accords with Heidegger’s thoughts. The words may be slightly different, but unmediated perception with a perceptual object appears to be synonymous with disclosure. Dokic takes it a step further in order to show that reality is an opaque concept that is not necessarily attached to notions of veracity, meaning that we can sustain perception of unreal objects. The case of depersonalization is the example he uses, and he points towards the finding that: “The point is not that we cannot know, by having a perceptual experience, whether its object is real or not. Rather, it is that a perceptual experience of an object, whether it is veridical or not, does not in itself involve the sense that the object is real. As a consequence, perception is not intrinsically tied to judgements of reality or even inclinations to form such judgements” (Dokic 305). This means that perception of an object can *feel* real or unreal, indicating that reality judgements and perception are not inextricably linked to one another. This is the lens through which I understand the meaning of the dialectic between the real and the unreal. This investigation reveals how modern warfare carries with it a set of conditions that cause regular vacillations and interaction between the real and unreal in more pronounced and dramatic ways than quotidian life.

4.2. Thingness

It is not a novel claim that there is a relationship between depersonalization and thingness. Aside from the testimony of depersonalized subjects, this link has also been explored by philosopher and psychologist Andrew Apter, who dubs it “prosthesis,” which he defines within the experience of depersonalization: “The depersonalization experience is broadly characterized by feelings of detachment, self-observation, and personal unreality. An additional, hitherto unspecified characteristic, is what I shall entitle 'prosthesis,' or the 'thing' experience.” (Apter 259). This prosthesis is categorized by “feelings of detachment, self-observation, and personal unreality,” which are observed in high stress situations. Not only did the soldiers of World War One find themselves in trauma ridden situations, but also the medical professionals who cared for them. It can be argued that thingness is an irremediable facet of our existence, at least philosopher Maren Wehrle makes a case for it in her paper “Being a Body and Having a Body: The twofold temporality of embodied intentionality.” The driving force behind her paper is the question of whether or not we *have* a body or we *are* a body. Having a body would seem to imply that it is a thing, something to possess. Being, on the other hand, seems to indicate that it is not something, but it just *is*. Wehrle takes a nuanced approach and makes the claim that both are true: “This means that, as humans, we are *doubly mediated*. Not only do we have first person perspective, in which we are oriented towards the world and implicitly towards ourselves but we also perceive ourselves from without, that is, we have an ‘ex-centric positionality’” (Wehrle 502-503). Ex-centric positionality means that we are able to see ourselves as an object. I contend that in moments of high stress and trauma this experience becomes more pronounced, as it did in descriptions of the body and self on the battlefield. Furthermore, this capacity to see the self as

object becomes highly relevant when discussing the techno-medical intervention of prosthetics, which quite literally adds an object to our subjectivity.

Literary figures can bolster this position as well. Apter argues that prosthesis is a useful philosophical tool that presents itself in many different philosophies that contemplate embodiment. Notably, he refers to Jean-Paul Sartre who highlights aspects of this phenomenon. Apter makes reference to a few scenes in *La Nausée*, but there is much more available in the text that begs further analysis. For example, if we take the famous passage, when Roquentin is sitting in the park and comes to grips with the strangeness of his surroundings, the bond between the two becomes clearer:

Est-ce que je l'ai rêvée? Cette énorme présence ? Elle était là, posée sur le jardin, dégringolée dans les arbres, toute molle, poissant tout, tout épaisse, une confiture. Et j'étais dedans, moi, avec tout le jardin. J'avais peur, mais j'étais surtout en colère, je trouvais ça si bête, si déplacé, je haïssais cette ignoble marmelade. Il y en avait, il y en avait! Ça montait jusqu'au ciel, ça s'en allait partout, ça remplissait tout de son affolement gélatineux et j'en voyais des profondeurs et des profondeurs, bien plus loin que les limites du jardin et que les maisons et que Bouville, je n'étais plus à Bouville, ni nulle part, je flottais. (Sartre, 190)

We are tipped off to the notion of a depersonalized and derealized state by the initial question “Est-ce que je l'ai rêvée?,” while the sensation of prosthesis is alluded to by the emphasis of the narrator on articulating the idea of presence, “Cette énorme présence,” and “Il y en avait, il y en avait!” These doubts and exclamations draw our attention to the thingness of the surrounding world of the narrator, and this brings out what Apter is implying with the concept of prosthesis, which is a common experience of the depersonalized subject. We can take this prosthesis a bit

further to realize the full definition given by Apter, examples where we can include the body of the subject. Roquentin is constantly baffled by existence, a few particularly rich pages illustrate his unease towards existence. The narrator picks up a newspaper and exclaims “comment les choses existent fort aujourd’hui,” (Sartre 146). What a curious phrase, because how can things exist more one day more than others? He is commenting on the presence of the newspaper, which causes him to be disgusted by his own existence, in particular his own bodily existence. The noun ‘existence’ and the verb ‘to exist’ are ubiquitous on these pages, but the noun is repeated three times in succession after the narrator draws his attention towards his hand “...existe, existe, existe...” (Sartre 147). Roquentin is shaken to his core by the strangeness that he is confronted by through objects in the world and by the existence of his own body.

The experience of depersonalization and derealization are interlinked by unreality and thingness. They arise in moments of severe stress and trauma, but also in everyday interactions as Sartre shows. The experience recasts the notion of reality for individuals coming up against their surroundings and their sense of self. Understandably these experiences lead to philosophical questions on the nature of reality and self. However, as Dokic states, it is more so the familiarity that one has with reality that comes into question, it is precisely this element that turns the experience of depersonalization into a philosophical one, and one that is particularly well suited for phenomenological investigation.

5. Coming Up Against the Real

I will be analyzing representations of depersonalization in World War One across four chapters. The first chapter explores the link between amputees and depersonalization, where the phenomenon of phantom limb is a major concern. The second chapter examines the inverse of

the first chapter; it focuses on the perpetrators of violence or amputators. As a defense mechanism, depersonalization is not only triggered by being injured, but can occur when one injures others as well. Amputators can also mean those who medically intervene to save lives, but these operations often have similar consequences. The third chapter examines prosthetics; of particular interest in this chapter is how individuals integrate objects into their personhood that are not ever fully able to become part of subjectivity. The fourth and final chapter is on facial injuries. The face is a unique part of the body that carries with it many perplexing questions about its role in identity and sociality.

Firmly situating depersonalization in the context of World War One shows how the Great War was a war against the real. I do not intend this to mean that reality was some kind of enemy that needed to be vanquished. Instead, I see it as soldiers coming up against the real in a way that challenges their ability to apprehend it as they did previously in their everyday lives. The artistic representations that followed this period are remainders of what was able to pass through this “coming against”; the stark and bizarre depictions of this war I see as distillations of the unreal, of the depersonalized. These elements imbue the period with a distinct sense divergence away from the century that preceded it—a period marked by the spirit of fracture.

Chapter One : Phantoms and Phonies

Phantom limb and the depersonalized body

In this chapter, I will discuss the body, in particular, the body as a whole with emphasis on limbs. What may seem like a straightforward topic can become quite puzzling. The truly quixotic aspect of limbs becomes visible when the relation between the subject and their limb(s) is altered. I will investigate two primary ways that the relationship can be altered: physically and psychologically. A limb may be severed from the body physically as well as from the mind, as we shall see. Additionally, after an amputation, a limb may appear as a ghost, that is to say, vividly sensed, but without a physical presence. This phenomenon is known as a phantom limb, a common phenomenon in amputees where they have the experience that their amputated limb is still present despite its severance. The depersonalized body will also be discussed in conjunction with the phantom limb. The depersonalized body is the experience where the body appears as unreal to the subject despite its ongoing presence, by extension then, the limb will appear as a depersonalized limb to the subject. In this way, depersonalization is opposed to a phantom limb insofar as the limb is present, yet it is experienced as an absence, while the phantom is an absence that is experienced as a presence. However, I will reiterate to avoid confusion, in general, when a subject experiences depersonalization, it is their entire body that is experienced as unreal.

The Great War permits a comparative study of these phenomena thanks to the vast representation and documentation of them. The tension between absence and presence arises in other intriguing ways as well during this period, namely through analysis of a historical figure, Kaiser Wilhelm II as well as through the literary work of Swiss author Blaise Cendrars, who will

serve as the focus of this chapter, in addition to philosophical considerations framing the significance of absence and presence.

Fractured Artists and Fractured Bodies

A nascent art form at the beginning of the twentieth century, Cubism sought to steer away from conventional techniques, the Cubists, “wanted instead to emphasize the two-dimensionality of the canvas. So they reduced and fractured objects into geometric forms, and then realigned these within a shallow relieflike space” (Rewald). Just as Cubism was known for its fracturing of the subject, so was the First World War, which was known for its incredibly high rate of limb severance due to effective implementation of lethal mechanized combat. The temporal proximity of the artistic representation of fragmentation and the physical fragmentation of soldiers on the battlefield is uncanny, no matter how coincidental.

Pablo Picasso, credited with the founding of Cubism, was inspired to innovate the techniques of Cubism after he visited an ethnographic museum at the *Palais du Trocadéro* displaying African fetish masks in Paris. An early work of Picasso’s, *Les Femmes d’Alger* (1907), is described by art critic and historian Hal Foster as a “primal scene of modern primitivism”(Foster 199), which situates itself perfectly well within the time period as the tension between European super powers was mounting, eventually descending toward a state of barbarism and primitivism on the continent.² According to Foster, this work of Picasso expresses an anxiety of loss. Picasso read the art as something that was meant to ward off the triggers of this anxiety: “Here, then, primitivism emerges as a fetishistic discourse, a recognition and

² Foster states that primitivism here is in opposition to the term archaic. Primitivism classifies ancient ‘tribal’ society that is cast into a nebulous past by the western mind with art defined by primitive essences, while the archaic refers to ancient ‘court’ societies that had static and hierarchical art.

disavowal not only of primitive difference, but of the fact that the West—its patriarchal subjectivity and socius—is threatened by loss, by lack, by others” (Foster 200). Despite the partial misreadings of African tribal masks on Picasso’s part as something magical,³ it appears that a part of the inspiration for Cubism exposed a universal and deep-seated societal anxiety toward loss, an anxiety that would be realized in the events of the coming war of 1914.

Other artists of the Cubist movement such as Georges Braque, Roger de La Fresnaye, Raymond Duchamp-Villon, participated in the Great War, each of them under their own circumstances and with their individual outcomes, yet united in their artistic style—a style that in a certain sense forecast the reality of fragmentations due to war injuries. Braque would suffer from a head injury, de La Fresnaye would contract tuberculosis during the war, which severely degraded his health, and Duchamp-Villon died of typhoid fever while stationed in military quarters. Europe thought itself above what it called “the primitive,” and even if its avant-garde art scene incorporated some apotropaic elements into its art, it was not enough to ward off the looming despair that would grip the continent and send it into chaos.

Severance and Its Many Shades

While Cubist art does pose intriguing parallels to the mangled bodies of the soldier, it is not the main topic of this work, limb severance, however, is. The definition of severance in this context is open to interpretation. When considering the meaning of severance, the most obvious connotation is that a part is physically separated from a whole, and that is certainly one aspect of its meaning that will be interrogated further. Nonetheless, it is not the only possible interpretation of what severance means because severance is not always necessarily physical. As previously

³ Foster clarifies that there are a variety of reasons the masks were created : ritualistic, apotropaic, decorative, therapeutic, etc.

stated, a subject can come to feel severed from their body psychologically. This can mean that a subject will report that their body does not feel as if it is their own, that it is not real, that their body is foreign to them. This phenomenon is known as depersonalization. Severance can also imply that a subject still feels that their body belongs to them, but they reject it to some other varying degree that does not quite make it a foreign object to their own subjectivity. The conversation surrounding severance is incredibly nuanced and should not be restricted to material separation, indeed, there is quite a good deal of overlap in the subjective experience of psychological and physical severance as we shall come to see. For these reasons, a wide net should be cast to assess how discontinuities in bodily integrity are felt and represented.

Nonetheless, the most common and most well documented circumstances of limb severance were medical, meaning the limb was amputated. Infection was a leading cause of amputation. The trenches of the Great War were extremely unhygienic: “L’hygiène corporelle du soldat dans les tranchées est mauvaise car la toilette est impossible. Fine poussière ou glaise collante, la terre enveloppe les hommes comme une seconde peau. Avec la crasse et la transpiration du corps, elle contribue à créer sur les téguments un environnement propice au développement microbien” (Debue-Barazer 15). Cold and damp conditions in the trenches would routinely lead to trench foot, a disease where the skin and tissue begin to break down and gangrene, and other microbial diseases may set in and, if it progressed too far, it would mean amputation. The proliferation of trench foot was a serious problem for the allies. It would put soldiers out of commission for weeks at a time even in cases that did not require amputation. Cases that did require amputation would terminate the soldiers’ duties on the front permanently. There are accounts of frustration on the part of medical professionals on the front: “L’infirmier Jean Pottecher écrivait à son père le 29 novembre 1917 : Nous avons eu 15 évacués pour pieds

de tranchées à la Cie. Je les avais tous soignés depuis plusieurs jours. Il y en a peut-être deux ou trois dont j'ai pu éviter l'évacuation, par mes soins : c'est peu" (Régner 317). In some cases, soldiers would become jealous of their affected comrades: "Auxence Guizart écrivait à ses parents : Il y a beaucoup de poilus qui se font encore évacuer aujourd'hui pour pieds gelés. Quant aux miens, ils ne veulent pas geler malheureusement car je voudrais bien une évacuation aussi" (Régner 317). Dismemberment could also occur instantly on the battlefield from an array of weapons that were capable of ripping limbs off.

As for the psychological severance, this requires more specific knowledge of dissociation. It is identifiable in individuals who possessed psychological predispositions toward depersonalization while in highly stressful circumstances such as those found in warfare. Apart from physical and psychological severance, the more nuanced forms of severance include the rejection of certain body parts. This rejection can occur for a multitude of reasons, but birth defects, medical malpractice, and environmental factors amplify the occurrence of limb severance. Speaking further to this type of severance, there is a quite clear example of a prominent historical figure in World War One who clearly had a challenging relationship with a limb: Kaiser Wilhelm II.

The Emperor and His Arm

Pertinent to this study is a case where one dysfunctional arm may have inadvertently caused the severance of hundreds of thousands of limbs during that war.⁴ Kaiser Wilhelm II, the

⁴ As stated in the introduction, drawing conclusions about the causes of war from singular individuals does not encompass the entire picture, and this study focuses on what are called "small" causes. However, there is a sizeable amount of scholars who have made a study of the Kaiser's arm as a source of psychological disturbance that could have caused erratic and unpredictable behavior, scholars such as : Freis, David, "Diagnosing the Kaiser: Psychiatry, Wilhelm II and the Question of German War Guilt *The William Bynum Prize Essay 2016*;" Gohritz, Andreas et al., "Potential Influence of One-Handedness on Politics and Philosophy of

emperor of Germany in the early twentieth century, had a notorious diminished left arm, which some have speculated was an underlying cause of World War One. At first, this may seem to be an extravagant claim, but body integrity is important for several reasons, as we will explore further. Let us focus on the case of the Kaiser.

The damage done to the Emperor's arm was incurred at birth. We have the medical account from the night of his birth when the incident occurred, in Berlin, on 9 February 1859. This translation relates the details of Wilhelm's birth, which indicates that Victoria, Wilhelm's mother, was having great trouble during the birth. It was a breech presentation, leading to the event which crippled her son's arm:

As a result the anus descended through the birth canal at a quarter to three, with the legs of the prince extended to the belly and chest. When I felt that the pulse of the umbilical cord was very weak and slow and intermittent, it became necessary to give her more chloroform to keep her more quiet and more relaxed in view of the required manipulation. I now brought down the extended legs and, since his life was severely threatened, I also brought down the (left) arm, which was extended at the side of the head, not without considerable effort because of the lack of space at the pelvic outlet. I rotated the buttocks of the child, in accordance with accepted procedures, and then freed the right arm, and finally the head, which I rotated towards the sacrum and delivered it.

As the pulse was slowed in the umbilical cord while only the anus was visible, the prince

the 20th Century;" along with most scholarship aligning with the Fischer hypothesis which blamed Germany for the war in general implicating to one degree or another a relationship between the Kaiser's arm and his politic. Most of the scholarship simultaneously warns that psychology is a normative science and therefore can be influenced by political motivations and there was a lot of pressure to find the cause of German aggression in WWI, even if it is not the complete picture.

was almost moribund. However after the usual measures he started to breathe, and opened his eyes before I brought him to the prepared bath. (Jacoby 179)

The force exerted on the arm of the prenatal Kaiser is what led to his malformation. Within the first six months of his life, he was subjected to torturous treatments in order to heal it. Often these treatments were outdated or downright barbaric. For example, it is revealed in the documentary *The Secret History of Queen Victoria's Disabled Grandson*, which focuses on the early life of the Kaiser, that a rabbit would be killed in front of him and then skinned, the still warm hide of the rabbit would be placed around the arm of young Wilhelm in hopes that the vitality of the wild animal would be transferred to his damaged arm. He would endure electroshock therapy in conjunction with rigid wooden and metal apparatuses that were meant to correct his posture. Even though this seems horrible, it pales in comparison to the fact that it is apparent that his mother was unable to fully love him because of his deformity. Victoria would write correspondence attesting to the fact that the handicap of her child created a great distance between them. The combination of these factors lead scholars to believe that the already aggressive political climate of Germany was taken to its limit with Wilhelm, who had endured a life wrought with complexes making him more warlike. The documentary with Dr. John Röhl as a consultant draws the conclusion that the Kaiser's physical handicap had a heavy influence on his politics. David Freis writes, "In the three decades of his reign, Wilhelm II repeatedly found himself at the centre of political scandals, caused by impulsiveness, erratic politics, inflammatory speeches and ham-fisted appearances on the international stage. Together with his personal eccentricities, the Kaiser's political blunders caused many contemporaries to wonder what was going on in the mind of the head of the German state" (Freis 280). On the other hand, the same scholarship that paints this picture of Wilhelm as a troubled political figure also cautions against

blaming him for the war. Such an understanding is seen as an attempt to delegitimize his reign, as had been attempted with other rulers in other time periods: “Blaming the emperors was a ‘dangerous mistake, because it tends to veil the true responsible, who is not a man, but a nation, the German one’” (Freis 282).

This case serves as an example to illustrate the pain and strangeness of having a limb that has been taken away in some respect. This affliction affects not only the physical appearance of the individual but also the mental life of the individual. What comes to mind is a sort of castration anxiety, a complex iterated by Sigmund Freud throughout his career. The castration complex arises out of the psychology of a male child who believes that all humans have male genitalia being met with the observation that they are wrong, this conviction is, "energetically maintained by boys, is obstinately defended against the contradictions which soon result from observation, and is only abandoned after severe internal struggles (the castration complex)"(Freud 195). Summarized briefly, the castration complex provokes a strong protective instinct over one's faculty for power rooted in a self-perceived lack of it, provoked by the internal struggle. Further scholarship shows there is the possibility that other compounding factors add to the severity of the castration reaction in young children : “...these reactions were severe only in children who had earlier experiences such as a birth defect or a surgical procedure that interfered with the development of a stable body image or had experienced loss of a parent, a depressed mother, or gross emotional neglect by the mother”(Galenson 334). Aforementioned historian John Röhl, who specializes in the Kaiser, gives many examples of how his mother, Victoria, emotionally neglected young Wilhelm. One anecdote from the documentary is striking: adolescent Wilhelm was sent to boarding school in England. He would write letters to his mother in English, one letter in particular borders on the erotic, in which he praises the beauty of his

mother's hands, the tenderness and plea for love that is in the letter is rejected by Victoria. Instead of reassuring her son of her love, she corrects his grammar. Röhl says in the documentary that this must have, "crushed the Kaiser." Furthermore, we see that physical deformity adds yet another dimension to the castration complex. As Brenner points out, Freud references Shakespeare to highlight this point: "The illustration he chose was a fictional character - Shakespeare's hunchbacked king, Richard III - who was depicted as filled with rage and with a determination to be revenged on the world for having been born with a physical deformity" (Brenner 183). Taking these points into consideration, it may be less difficult to understand the belligerent behavior of Germany in the First World War, even before the war started, the Kaiser would make very inflammatory comments, attested to by Christopher Clark who details this particular account below:

On 4 April 1906, Kaiser Wilhelm II was a dinner guest at the US embassy in Berlin. During a lively conversation with his American hosts, the Kaiser spoke of the necessity of securing more space for the rapidly growing German population, which had counted around 40 million at the time of his ascension, he told the ambassador, but was now around 60 million. This was a good thing in itself, but the question of nutrition was going to become acute in the next twenty years. On the other hand, large portions of France appeared to be under-populated and in need of development; perhaps one should ask the French government whether they would mind pulling their border back westwards to accommodate the surfeit of Germans? (Clark 179)

It should be noted that comments such as these were quite regularly espoused by the Kaiser. Yet, there is another curious common action taken by the Kaiser that points us back toward a castration complex, he always backed down when things got too serious, he often talked tough

but when it came down to it he was very patient and cautious (Clark 178). The need to compensate for his physical lack of power may have manifested in these ham-fisted outbursts in formal settings, but the provocations themselves were never materialized due to his own perceived lack of power.

In this Freudian line of thinking, we see that this type of loss could be experienced as a castration anxiety, meaning that the diminished left arm of the Kaiser assaulted his claim to power and, therefore, this internal struggle caused him to play the role of the aggressor. The severe emotional neglect of his mother intensified these symptoms, ultimately leading to a development which was constantly trying to protect power, quite fiercely. We observe that there is an absence, a lack of a functioning arm and the lack of maternal love. These absences serve as evidence for the behavior of Wilhelm during a time of great turmoil for the world.

Given that the Kaiser's psychological profile has been subjected to such scrutiny, it gives us an exemplary case study of how the severance of a limb - whether it be surgical amputation or metaphorical amputation - has a profound effect on the lived embodied experience for the individual and, furthermore, it shows how it can impact society at large. In a twisted way, and a bit poetically, the lack of connection between a world leader and his limb correlates chronologically to so many mutilations of so many young men at the start of the twentieth century. Were they too subject to these tribulations of amputation ? As we delve further into this issue, we will see a direct correlation between the violence inflicted on many soldiers that led to feelings of depersonalization, along with the farther reaching social implications of these amputations that would outstrip the purview of the individual.

Cendrars and the Depersonalized Body

We can see other instances of the psychologically depersonalized body in the war. The common term ‘shell shocked’ would come to describe soldiers who were unable to function without any apparent physical cause. Despite the lack of physical injuries, there were physical reasons posited as the cause of this sickness. Jean Lépine, professor of clinical nervous diseases at the university of Lyon, speculates that it may in part be attributed to sleep deprivation. He states that there were certain factors among many that caused this expression of malady, such as “*Le froid, l’humidité, la boue glacée qui fait carapace, l’immobilité qui engourdit et qui est sans remède, les conditions de l’installation, les ébranlements, l’odeur, tout semble combiner pour user les résistances physiques*” (Lépine 30). These factors in combination with unending forced marches, the constant barrage of shells, the anxiety of the next attack, understandably, led to a lack of sleep. It is believed by Lépine that these factors induced a type of dreamlike wakefulness: *l’onirisme*. This state could be further divided in severity between acute and severe. The more severe cases have extreme symptoms, such as a total withdrawal from external life and involuntary actions that resemble sleep walking. Lépine makes comparisons to hypnotism, which makes sense, given that the monotony of the shell fire resembled a metronome, classically used to put subjects into a suggestive state. The fissure of reality found in the soldiers who suffered from shell shock, torn between waking life and a nightmarish dream world is highly indicative of depersonalized states:

Le sommeil est troublé de deux manières, qui se combinent : il est pendant la nuit moins profond que normalement, entrecoupé de cauchemars, dont la répétition et l’intensité conduisent insensiblement le sujet à la confusion mentale hallucinatoire, à l’onirisme, dont il sera question plus loin. Pendant le jour, l’état ordinaire de veille est moins net; il y a moins de lucidité, d’activité cérébrale, d’attention. La sensation de sommeil peut

manquer, mais l'homme dort tout éveillé, indifférent aux ordres, oublieux des consignes, incapable de réflexion suivie, lent à comprendre les idées les plus simples, inerte et hébété. (Lépine 15)

This detachment from reality, admittedly, goes beyond depersonalization, yet, in the acute instances of shell shock we get a glimpse of how a type of what could be called 'unreality' installed itself in the soldiers on the front. The more severe the cases, the more it becomes evident that something more than depersonalization or derealization is at work. The involuntary trembling, the inability to speak, the unevenly dilated pupils, the hallucinations that soldiers would act out, these symptoms clearly outstrip the purview of a dissociative disorder. But, in its more mild form, there are striking similarities—as we have seen with it being described as a dreamlike state. While the technological advancements leading to the shell came to haunt many with phantom limbs, there were also many who came to be haunted by waking nightmares, pulling them further away from reality, an amputation of reality, if you will.

Swiss Author and amputee, Blaise Cendrars, wrote directly about his wartime experience in which he lost his arm. But, he also recorded examples of a more mental type of dissociation in *La Main Coupée*, Cendrars details his war experience in a manner that can quite easily be read as depersonalized experiences. There are several examples in the text that not only point to a dissociation between Cendrars and his own body, but also between him and his environment. Insofar as the environment is concerned, we see that Cendrars makes allusions to the landscape as being fabricated and therefore artificial or unreal, for example in this passage:

Le paysage est un décor truqué. Le pays est camouflé. Champs artificiels, nature sculptée par les ingénieurs ou a surgi tout a coup une ville “sans âge”. Le premier petit bois est une toile peinte, les deux autres sont des tracteurs d'artillerie lourde, recouverts de

branches de pins. La route droite à l'infini est une route peinte à la chaux, alors que la vraie route traverse diagonalement la plaine, invisible sous des banderoles couleur mousse. (Cendrars 13)

The most notable references to the unreality of the landscape are 'décor truqué,' 'pays est camouflé,' and 'champs artificiels.' The fissure with reality is clearly pronounced in these lines. Comparing the landscape to a 'décor truqué' implies there is something fake about the landscape. This notion of falsity or unreality shines through other parts of the environment that Cendrars describes as well. He uses the words *camouflé* and *artificiels* to gesture towards a sentiment of something being hidden. Cendrars's narrator has his belief in the veracity of his surroundings dissimulated, the notion that his surroundings are legitimate is taken away, and so he describes his surroundings as being strange to him, they become depersonalized and impersonal. Furthermore, there are instances that directly call the reality of the environment into question and go as far as to question whether or not he is in the same dimension, "Travail anonyme. Abstrait. Perpetuel. Depuis l'origine de l'espèce Travail mobilisé. Suis-je au pays de la quatrième dimension ou vois-je tout au microscope effroyablement agrandi ?" (Cendrars 14). This means that even prior to the chaos of having his limb severed it is clear that the notion of reality is already in flux. What is more, the sentiments of artificiality permeate the environment to the subject. The mirroring of unreality between the subject and environment is highlighted by the instances that point toward depersonalization. Cendrars chooses to illustrate the war experience in ways that reflect loss of identity, loss of individuality, loss of agency, loss of gender, and comparisons of the human to machines. Identity (and therefore self-recognition) is challenged by Cendrars as he describes what effect long forced marches have on the individual, "Tout le monde est trempé de sueur. Les yeux sont fixes, la face congestionnée. On ne sait pas

comment cela va, marche, se traîne et abat encore du chemin. La longue chenille d'hommes remue" (Cendrars 10). It appears that the soldiers are exhausted from marching, and that the longer they march the more they become depersonalized, which is evidenced by *Les yeux sont fixes, la face congestionnée*, which denotes a subjectivity that is beside itself, or not in a state in which it usually finds itself. The march makes the men less expressive and more machine-like. Cendrars goes on to describe that the soldiers collectively exist in a daze (Cendrars 10), are dead from fatigue (Cendrars 11), and that some appear asexual (Cendrars 14). Each of these instances points to a dissociation from normal functioning consciousness insinuating that the conditions and requirements of war detach the individual from the ongoing circumstances that instilled a sense of reality in them. Their bodies were perceived as differently as the surrounding landscape was, often described by Cendrars and others,⁵ in terms that evoke notions of unreality and artificiality. Eventually these separations would culminate from a psychological mutation into a physical separation of Cendrars's arm from his body due to blast trauma.

Amputation is generally understood as the surgical removal of an extremity. It is often considered only as a last resort. There are many reasons an amputation may take place: infection, vascular disease, tumor, or trauma. Often, there are prominent psychological side effects, such as depression, anxiety, and phantom limbs, that are associated with the procedure, especially in the case of traumatic separation of a limb (Roşca et al. 1). In the article "Psychological Consequences in Patients With Amputation of a Limb: An Interpretative-Phenomenological Analysis," we get a first hand account of the trauma of limb loss: participant number four, an individual who underwent amputation. Participant number four describes their body as a prison

⁵ Nearly all descriptions of landscapes from the period describe an apocalyptic and unrecognizable terrain. Barbusse *Le Feu* and Cendrars are classic examples, Guéno's *Lettres de Poilus 1914-1918* is a large collection of letters from the front that describe the landscape as unrecognizable.

“...awakening from the (induced) coma was a nightmare ... I could not move ... I wanted to get away ...it was terrible! I felt I was in a prison and I could not run. I could see my right hand, but I missed my left hand. Why? For a moment I wanted to die. God, take me! Lord, I cannot live like this!”(Roşca et al. 3). Participant four reveals a profound reconceptualization of their body after having suffered an amputation: the body is viewed afterwards as a prison. The psychological shock of amputation turns the body into something that holds the subject against its will. It creates a dialogue that even denies the drive to live, as participant four exemplifies by stating that they no longer wanted to live if they were to be an amputee. Furthermore, we note that the body is metaphorically turned on its head, as the body is where subjectivity expresses its freedom: freedom of speech, freedom of motion, freedom of artistic expression, etc. However, in the moments following amputation it turns into a prison, an object, something that dams up and restrains the freedom of subjectivity.

On top of harrowing thoughts such as these, amputees also may develop severe insomnia, have dreams that their limb has returned, and experience a phantom limb. Participant number four lost their arm in a car accident: when they woke up their arm was gone. It is easy to imagine that the soldiers who were amputated in the Great War felt the same things that participant number four did at the time of their accident, but it is important to acknowledge the differences between their situations. The most noticeable gap between participant number four and the injured soldiers of World War One may be medical advancement. Participant number four wakes up from a medically induced coma, whereas we have the accounts of soldiers in the Great War suffering their amputation and remaining conscious, or, at best, under the effects of ether. The sources of authors writing first hand about their amputation experiences are not as plentiful as one may think, but one prominent example does exist.

Blaise Cendrars also writes of the immediate shock of having lost an arm in World War

One:

Ce n'était partout que fuites, cris, hurlements, gémissements, plaintes, et mon bras coupé me faisait si mal que je me mordais la langue pour ne pas gueuler, et de temps en temps de longs frissons me secouaient car j'avais froid, sous la pluie, ainsi, tout nu, allongé sur mon étroit brancard, immobile, ankylosé, ne pouvant faire un mouvement gêné que j'étais, comme une accouchée par son nouveau-né, par l'énorme pansement, gros comme un poupon, qui se serrait contre mon flanc, cette chose étrangère que je ne pouvais déplacer, sans remuer un univers de douleurs, ni prendre dans ma main valide sans voir ce gros tampon blanc s'imbiber de rouge, ressentir une brûlure atroce et me rendre compte que ma vie m'échappait, s'en allait, goutte à goutte, sans que je ne puisse rien pour la retenir car on ne peut arrêter son cœur, et mon cœur, qui battait régulièrement, à chaque coup envoyait une refoulée de sang que je sentais, comme si je l'avais vue, gicler par le bout de mon bras coupé, - et ces pulsations, moralement et physiquement insupportables, me permettaient de compter le temps qui seul dans la mêlée furieuse de cette nuit horrible, dont j'enregistrais tous les détails, s'écoulait inexorablement, ce qui est dans sa véritable nature de secondes, de fractions de seconde, d'éternité. (Cendrars 13-14)

Participant number four and Cendrars's narrator from *J'ai saigné* both experienced the immediate after-effects of a traumatic amputation. There is a desire in both accounts to evade or flee the body, yet both narrators remain impotent in their flight: the body becomes a type of prison for them both. The development of insomnia in participant number four echoes the agony of Cendrars's narrator who lives in eternity in one night. Cendrars would write to his friends

often about his phantom limb, as participant four would have similar experiences. These descriptions demonstrate an alteration of the subjects' relationship to their own embodiment after suffering traumatic limb separation. We should note that transforming the subject into a hostage trapped in a body evokes a notion of depersonalization toward the body, where it is not the same as it was before, rather, it is unrecognizable. In accounts of depersonalization and derealization, there are instances in which an individual observes the existence of their limb, but they do not feel that its presence is correlated to them, it is unrecognizable.

The strangeness of the limb is attributable to a distinct sentiment that the body is somehow more of a 'thing' than a body, and in this case the "thing" is a prison. It is often said that the body takes on a quality of 'thingness' in states of depersonalization.⁶ This 'thingness' de-personalizes the body, making it unparticular to the individual. Neurologist Oliver Sacks describes instances in patients with diabetes which may lend some perspective to the experience. It is called the "glove in stocking" syndrome, which creates a large distance between an individual and their limb: "If the neuropathy is sufficiently severe, patients go beyond feelings of numbness (the "glove-and stocking" feeling), to a feeling of complete nothingness or de-realization" (Sacks 77). This derealization (often present in depersonalization) cuts off the individual from their member. It often happens rapidly: "Typically this feeling of de-realization, if it occurs, is absolutely sudden, and the return of reality, if it occurs, is equally sudden. There is, as it were, a critical (functional and ontological) threshold" (Sacks 77). To clarify further, we can turn toward philosopher Dylan Trigg, one of a few philosophers who deal directly with

⁶ Most notably the term "prosthetize" was coined by Andrew Apter, see introduction. This term implies that the body is viewed in the same way as a thing or object is viewed by the subject. There is a species of resistance to the subjects ability to feel as if they are a part of their own body, the same way subjects do not feel as if they are a part of a tree standing before them.

depersonalization, who highlights the relationship between depersonalization and agency, which complicates pre-reflective claims of ownership between a subject and their body:

There are variations of this experience. If I am, for some curious reason, coerced into drinking coffee, then while I may feel that I am still in possession of a sense that it is *I* who am coerced, I may at the same time feel deprived of my sense of agency in being forced to undergo an action against my volitional will. Here, too, we can think of involuntary memories as adhering to the same logic: a memory emerges and is recognised as my own (however loosely), but at the same time, there may still exist a vague doubt that I was the agent responsible for bringing those memories to consciousness. The sense of ownership is thus predicated on a pre-reflective sense of mineness, which secures the corporeal basis of subjectivity. In cases of depersonalization, a sense of bodily ownership is compromised. (Trigg 277)

The functional and ontological threshold in Sacks's patients is pierced by a compromised sense of bodily ownership. The depersonalized limb is both unreal and coercive, to a certain extent. Cendrars conceptualizes his amputated arm as a strange thing, and it locks him in something like a prison, forcing him to enter an eternity. Trigg turns us toward definitions provided by psychiatrist Mauricio Sierra to better understand how depersonalization disrupt bodily integrity :

According to Mauricio Sierra, leading specialist in the field, depersonalization is marked by three aspects: a feeling of disturbed bodily subjectivity (which carries with it a sense of displacement); a diminishment of affective feeling (which carries with it a dislocation from intersubjective relations); and a corresponding and overarching sense of unreality (which carries with it a sense of estrangement or alienation, be it from one's surroundings or, in the case of "anomalous subjective recall," from one's past. (Trigg 277)

All of Sierra's parameters seem to imply some sort of severance. First, we encounter a feeling of 'disturbed bodily subjectivity' or 'displacement,' which points to a break in the homeostasis of bodily integrity. Second, we read there is a 'dislocation' from intersubjective relations, which clearly implies a gap between subjectivities that is present in depersonalization that was not present in the same way before. Last, but not least, we have the instance of unreality, which is present in all accounts of depersonalization; it is the trademark of the experience. It is classified by estrangement and alienation from the environment or 'anomalous subjective recall,' which is another way of saying how a subject remembers themselves. With depersonalization, there is a chasm between how the subject experiences the self while depersonalized, and the memory of how life used to be, before the subject was depersonalized. This is the subjective notion that I view as a species of amputation, and we need not look further than the verbiage used to describe the phenomenon : 'displacement' 'dislocation,' and 'alienation.' We will come to see how these elements are present in the representations of Cendrars.

Blast traumas, such as that suffered by Cendrars, are listed as a specific reason under the subcategory of trauma related amputations. The First World War was not the first war to know what blast trauma was, of course, but it was the first of its kind in terms of scale. The war was total and no populations were off limits. The Germans engaged in several bombings via zeppelins during the First World War. These indiscriminate bombings made victims of citizens who had no business being attacked, such as Denise Cartier, "One of the earliest celebrated civilian victims of the attacks on Paris was thirteen-year-old Denise Cartier, who was injured September 27, 1914, when a bomb shattered her leg, which then had to be amputated below her knee. Her age, gender, and stoicism - she told the agent who rescued her, 'above all, do not tell Mama that it's serious' - made this "innocent *filette*" a "hero" (Grayzel 614). The Germans used

these tactics as a means to lower citizen support for the war by breaking morale. Instead, we see that it bolstered French hatred for Germans, and furthermore their actions would make heroes of non-combatant French citizens such as Denise. From these types of traumatic amputations, we would also expect some mental afflictions, for the individual and the nation, afflictions that would engender sentiments of unreality similar to those as expressed by Cendrars.

Cendrars and Phantom Limb

Blaise Cendrars not only captured moments of collective and individual detachment from reality preceding his amputation, he also documented his experience with phantom limbs. The word phantom stems from Greek and Latin words that deal with illusions, dreams, or unreality. This lines up perfectly with the phenomenon, since it feels as if there is a limb present, while it is all too obvious to the sight and senses of others that it is not present at all. Indeed, the opposite is true: it is gone. In fact, the illusion of the limb can extend much further and even appear to be multiple arms, or at least that is how Cendrars's autobiographical narrator reports the sensation in the work previously cited, *J'ai Saigné*, where he expounds on the experience of losing his arm in the war:

J'ai dû m'agiter sur mon brancard, gesticuler; gesticuler non seulement de ce bras gauche, dont je ne savais pas encore me servir, mais brandir aussi cette main droite, cette main que je venais de perdre, qu'on venait de me ravir en Champagne, que j'avais laissée derrière moi dans le charnier de Somme-Py et dont l'étonnante présence se révélait, se manifestait, se faisait sentir dans les douleurs exorbitantes qui poussaient de mon moignon, grandissaient, se ramifiaient, me tiraillaient en tous sens, me faisaient me tordre comme si j'avais été consumé dans un brasier intérieur, se généralisaient, mais restaient

néanmoins très précieuses tout en se multipliant comme si l'on m'avait coupé, non pas un bras sur deux avec bistouri, mais avec une scie circulaire, comme à bouddha, un éventail de bras sans cesse renaissants, sensation ahurissante qui me faisait sortir hors de moi, qui troublait mes réflexes les plus élémentaires, me désorientait, me déséquilibrait et me faisait perdre jusqu'à la notion exacte de ma dimension corporelle. (Cendrars 22)

Cendrars recounts the two principal parts of the definition of the phantom; unreality and illusion. He recognizes that his limb has been severed, and yet there is something that persists in its place that takes up the form of not one hand, but multiple hands. He then compares this to his bodily situation which he finds disorienting, making him lose an exact schema of his bodily dimension.

Sacks defines a phantom limb as 'a phantom,' in the sense that neurologists use; it is a persistent image or memory of part of the body, usually a limb, for months or years after its loss" (Sacks 78). In fact, this is a necessary component in the establishment of the next stage in the healing process: the phantom often serves as a guide for the use of a prosthetic, something that is apparently common knowledge among amputees: "All amputees, and all who work with them, know that a phantom limb is essential if an artificial limb is to be used" (Sacks 79). Another account from Sacks demonstrates the double-edged sword of the phantom limb being necessary and painful: "There's this *thing*, this ghost-foot, which sometimes hurts like hell - and the toes curl up, or go into spasm. This is worst at night, or with the prosthesis off, or when I'm not doing anything. It goes away when I strap the prosthesis on and walk. I still feel the leg then, vividly, but it's a *good* phantom, different - it animates the prosthesis, and allows me to walk" (Sacks 81).⁷

⁷ The mentioning of *thing* here is very reminiscent of how depersonalized individuals refer to their body as a *thing*. While I have posited the absence/presence dialectic of depersonalization and phantom limb as being opposite to one another, their synthesis may lie in this *thingness* which extends beyond absence and presence as sensation (visual and tactile) would conceive of it.

The question of how the phantom limb arises is quite curious. The sensation of the limb is so potent that the amputee earnestly believes there is a limb there, despite their better judgment. Casual knowledge of the nervous system tells us that it should be impossible to feel sensations that are not in the flesh, however, we are then confronted with the prevalent occurrence of phantom limbs that defies this understanding. Merleau-Ponty establishes that it must be a psycho-physiological phenomenon, and it need not be one or the other.

Writing of a soldier from World War One, Merleau-Ponty states “Enfin le membre fantôme garde souvent la position même que le bras réel occupait au moment de la blessure : un blessé de guerre sent encore dans son bras fantôme les éclats d’obus qui ont lacéré son bras réel” (Merleau-Ponty 104). Sacks draws our attention to a sailor who has an irrational fear of poking his eye out: “A sailor accidentally cut off his right index finger. For forty years afterwards, he was plagued by an intrusive phantom of the finger rigidly extended, as it was when cut off. Whenever he moved his hand toward his face - for example, to eat or to scratch his nose - he was afraid that this phantom finger would poke his eye out” (Sacks 79). These absent pieces have been widely reported as generating real sensation, real enough to cause distress and pain. Without a solely physical explanation, there must be a discussion of the psychological element at play. Merleau-Ponty undertakes a philosophical inquiry in order to delve deeper into the significance of the phantom:

Une émotion, une circonstance qui rappelle celles de la blessure font apparaître un membre fantôme chez des sujets qui n’en avaient pas. Il arrive que le bras fantôme, énorme après l’opération, se rétrécisse ensuite pour s’engloutir enfin dans le moignon “avec le consentement du malade à accepter sa mutilation”. Le phénomène du membre fantôme s’éclaire ici par le phénomène d’anosognosie, qui exige visiblement une

explication psychologique. Les sujets qui ignorent systématiquement leur main droite paralysée et tendent la gauche quand on leur demande la droite parlent cependant de leur bras paralysé comme d'un "serpent long et froid", ce qui exclut l'hypothèse d'une véritable anesthésie et suggère celle d'un refus de la déficience. Faut-il donc dire que le membre fantôme est un souvenir, une volonté ou une croyance, et, à défaut d'une explication physiologique, en donner une explication psychologique ? Pourtant aucune explication ne peut ignorer que la section des conducteurs sensitifs qui vont vers l'encéphale supprime le membre fantôme. (Merleau-Ponty 105)

The similarities between this description given by Merleau-Ponty and those of Cendrars are quite prominent. In both instances, we note that the phantom does not adhere to the corporeal dimensions of the limb pre-severance. Rather, the phantom exaggerates its size and, in the case of Cendrars, it multiplies itself as well into several limbs. It is also worth noting that the phantom has a quality of protraction and retraction—it appears and disappears—true to its name. The existence of the phantom limb throws the general knowledge of the boundaries of the body into disarray. Also in the citation, we note that he brings to our attention that there is sometimes a refusal of sickness - anosognosia. In this case, he points out how a patient with a paralyzed hand may refer to it as a long cold snake: it is a mere thing. Merleau-Ponty speculates that the ability of patients to ignore a part of their body is a psychological capacity and that perhaps the phantom shares a relation to this, that the phantom is the memory of the limb, a will or belief. It is also crucial to recognize that he acknowledges that there are certain interventions on the nervous system that can be taken to negate the phantom limb, implying that it is at least in part a physical phenomenon. However, Merleau-Ponty asks us to challenge our understanding of how we *are* in the world in order to better place the phantom within it:

Le refus de la déficience n'est que l'envers de notre inhérence à un monde, la négation implicite de ce qui s'oppose au mouvement naturel qui nous jette à nos tâches, à nos soucis, à notre situation, à nos horizons familiers. Avoir un bras fantôme, c'est rester ouvert à toutes les actions dont le bras seul est capable, c'est garder le champ pratique que l'on avait avant la mutilation. Le corps est le véhicule de l'être au monde, et avoir un corps c'est pour vivant se joindre à un milieu défini, se confondre avec certains projets et s'y engager continuellement. Dans l'évidence de ce monde complet où figurent encore des objets maniables, dans la force du mouvement qui va vers lui et où figurent encore le projet d'écrire ou de jouer du piano, le malade trouve la certitude de son intégrité.

(Merleau-Ponty 110)

It would seem that the phantom becomes part of the amputee in order to maintain a continuity in being: it is necessary for the integrity of the self. The psychological desire to interact with the objects of the outside world seems to charm the phantom out of the amputee, like a snake charmer charms the serpent out of the basket.

Merleau-Ponty and *la chair du monde*

There is another concept of Merleau-Ponty's that directly speaks to the phantom limb and the depersonalized body, one that reiterates notions of absence and presence, although he uses the terms visible and invisible. A good deal is revealed about this concept in the posthumous work, *Le Visible et l'invisible*. I will start with a definition of the concepts that illustrates my point: *chair du monde*.

Merleau-Ponty is quite clear that we should not think of the *chair du monde* as human or animal flesh as we conceive of and define it, rather it is more fundamental than that:

Chair du monde, décrite (à propos de temps, espace, mouvement) comme ségrégations, dimensionnalité, continuation, latence, empiètement – Puis interroger derechef ces phénomènes-questions : ils nous renvoient à *Einfühlung* percevant-perçu, car ils veulent dire que nous sommes déjà *dans* l'être ainsi décrit, que nous *en sommes*, que, entre lui et nous, il y a *Einfühlung*. (Merleau-Ponty 297)

Einfühlung is the German word for empathy, so what Merleau-Ponty is hinting at is an empathy between perceiver and perceived. This invites us to reengage with Kaiser Wilhelm II, Cendrars, and Participant number four and draw our attention to the significance of the perceiver-perceived binary. This empathy is a kinship between us and the *chair du monde*. Just as objects appear to us in a manner of perceiver and perceived, so does our body appear this way to us. We consider our body as part of our subjectivity, then we must include it within the domain of things. The flesh of the world (*la chair du monde*) is its dimensionality, continuation, latency, and encroachment; the flesh of the world is given as the visible. For Merleau-Ponty, there is a type of empathy between seer and seen, which is expressed as reflexivity. It is this relationship that allows for us to understand the body:

C'est par la chair du monde qu'on peut en fin de compte comprendre le corps propre —
La chair du monde, c'est de l'Être-vu, *i.e.* c'est un Être qui est *éminemment percipi*, et c'est par elle qu'on peut comprendre le *percipere*: ce perçu qu'on appelle mon corps s'appliquant au reste du perçu *i.e.* se traitant lui-même comme un perçu par soi et donc comme percevant, tout cela n'est possible en fin de compte et ne veut dire quelque chose que parce qu'il y a l'Être, non pas l'Être en soi, identique à soi, dans la nuit, mais l'Être qui contient aussi sa négation, son *percipi*. (Merleau-Ponty 299)

The body is perceived and is the perceiver; the body relies upon a foundation of what is already perceived in order to manifest itself. In other words, the body could not be perceived if there was nothing for it to rest on. What it rests upon is *la chair du monde*. Merleau-Ponty goes on to say that this gives *la chair du monde* a type of being that is not the type of being we take as our being—embodied with a self—but rather, it is a more raw form of being that is represented by negation of being, i.e., everything that is not us. Experiences listed above as depersonalized experiences seem to take on a positivistic nature of the visible, while the experiences of the phantom limb seem to take on the negative, the invisible.

Through this explanation of *la chair du monde*, Merleau-Ponty arrives at a definition of what the body as a thing means to a subject that perceives itself: “...elle [la conscience] tient à ce que je suis celui qui 1) a un monde visible, i. e. un corps dimensionnel et participable 2) i. e. un corps visible pour lui-même 3) et donc finalement une présence à soi qui est absence de soi” (Merleau-Ponty 298). Nonetheless, there are still differences in this philosophy between objects perceived in the world and the body. This is where we are invited to look at the role the invisible plays in this dialectic. The invisible can be highlighted by the way the body moves with us, yet as we move, our location to these things becomes relative, however, this is not the case for our body:

Cela veut dire que mon corps est fait de la même chair que le monde (c’est un perçu), et que de plus cette chair de mon corps est participée par le monde, il la *reflète*, il empiète sur elle et elle empiète sur lui (le senti à la fois comble de subjectivité et comble de matérialité), ils sont dans rapport de transgression ou d’enjambement – Ceci encore veut dire : mon corps n’est pas seulement un perçu parmi les perçus, il est mesurant de tous, *Nullpunkt* de toutes les dimensions du monde. P. ex. Il n’est pas un mobile ou mouvant

parmi tous les mobiles ou mouvants, je n'ai pas conscience de son mouvement comme *éloignement par rapport à moi*, il *sich bewegt* alors que les choses *sont mues*.

(Merleau-Ponty 298)

The body is ground zero for Merleau-Ponty; it is part of the world but also enjoys a unique privilege of being able to sense itself within the world and formulate a sentiment of self. The body *moves* while things are *moved*, as he puts it. This seems to insinuate a reliance and mastery over the world; as we are subjects, while objects are things. We do not want to assume that this finding gives a sort of divine quality to the human subject, which appears to be elevated above the object, which is only a perceived and not a perceiver. However, it is crucial to recognize that Merleau-Ponty is pointing out that we are reliant on this perceived world in order to be perceivers. We are rooted in *la chair du monde*, and more so we are limited by our kinship to visibility. This means the limits of our reflexivity are determined by that which is invisible to us :

Le redoublement quasi "réflexif", la réflexivité du corps, le fait qu'il se touche touchant, se voit voyant, ne consiste pas à surprendre une activité de liaison derrière le lié, à se réinstaller dans cette activité constituante; la perception de soi (sentiment de soi disait Hegel) ou perception de la perception ne convertit pas ce qu'elle saisit en objet et ne coïncide pas avec une source constituante de la perception : en fait je ne réussis pas tout à fait à me toucher touchant, à me voir voyant, l'expérience que j'ai de moi percevant ne va pas au-delà d'une sorte d'*imminence*, elle se termine dans l'invisible, simplement cet invisible est *son invisible*, i. e. l'envers de *sa* perception spéculaire, de la vision concrète que j'ai de mon corps dans le miroir. (Merleau-Ponty 298)

If any special status is afforded to the body as a subjectivity, we note that this status is somewhat diminished by the limitation of the body as an object that cannot fully apprehend itself. If what

makes the body special is its ability to perceive itself while also being a perceived object, then we see that it is not successful in its accomplishment of this feat; it is still like a thing in this regard. Just as mere things are incapable of entering into this play of perceiver and perceived, the body as a thing is thwarted in its attempt to go beyond this limitation as well. The fact that we cannot see the entirety of our body is enough evidence to show us the shortcoming in trying to transcend being a thing. In other words, even though we do have a capacity that goes beyond a thing, we are still subject to this aspect of thingness to a degree. This is where our empathy to the visible ends; this is the invisible. The inability to perceive the posterior section of the body without a mirror makes it invisible, among many other examples which underline our perceptive insufficiencies. The phantom, in this line of thinking, would be an attempt to reintegrate the lost limb back into the visible while it is condemned to the invisible, to a strict limitation of our self reflexive empathy. The case of Cendrars's Buddha arm here becomes tragic, for if we read Cendrars with Merleau-Ponty, then we see his phantom contorting and exaggerating itself as a means to reenter the realm of visibility. The phantom is the pain of the banished limb attempting to regain entry to its paradise lost, and the surreal sensations the narrator details are the failing attempts for the limb to reengage the empathy of the perceiver-perceived dyad. In its attempts to break through back into the visible it is perceived as a thing, but without any evidence of its existence, reading it this way dissolves the paradox.

In Merleau-Ponty's thinking, we are shown that we have a deep bond to things that are not our body, being given that we belong to the visible, the perceived. While the body is different from things in terms of its relativity to the perceiving agent (since it moves in unison with it), it may appear to be more than a thing. Nonetheless, it is still not beyond thingness, since it suffers a similar plight to things insofar as it does not have the ability to fully capture itself. Our rapport

to the *chair du monde* does not extend into the invisible, which is not available to reflexive self exploration. However, the phantom limb poses a challenge to this and the strangeness of its attempts leaves us perplexed. This framework provides an important context of how a depersonalized state can firmly seize the body as a thing as well provide ground to understand the bizarre descriptions of the phantom limb.

Sutures and the Wound

The casualties of World War One force us to rethink the relationship between a sense of reality and the body. The rethinking of this relationship is particularly relevant when it is in regard to loss. What is clear is that it is the very sense of loss that causes many of these issues to become so grave: the loss of a mother's affection, the loss of the sense of reality, the loss of flesh, the loss of the visible, etc. These losses are also personal matters, but they had ripple effects out into the collective. One of the most prominent losses was the apparent inability of the government to properly accommodate those who were injured in the war. For instance, oftentimes, there was no sufficient institutional framework to ensure that those who were injured in the war were adequately taken care of; French historian Antoine Prost brings to light an example of a veteran who had to find employment because he was unable to secure benefits from the state, "L'adjudant qui a un bras amputé peut gagner son pain quotidien, par exemple comme surveillant de collège : on lui refusait donc la pension d'invalidité qu'on lui avait accordée s'il avait été lieutenant." (Prost 14). Soldiers who were injured in the service, therefore, were not automatically given stipends to facilitate their daily needs, or to recognize their sacrifice for the country. The failure of the state to properly address the needs of injured veterans led to complications within the public sphere as well.

Not only was there a direct failure of the institutions, but there was an overall failure as a society to adequately address the needs of injured veterans. The wounded, who were sometimes thrown back into public life without financial assistance, found themselves without much support after their stay at the hospital. Furthermore, when they were out in public, there was no campaign to inform the public of how to treat war veterans with injuries. Prost cites examples that highlight the coldness they faced upon their return to public spaces. He points out public transportation specifically as an obstacle for veterans, “Les bousculades dans le métro, l’autobus ou les tramways les indignent particulièrement,”; the hustle and bustle of modern life proved to be very difficult for the wounded, who were not as mobile as the healthy civilian population, a population that was quite calloused at times, “les civils ne s’inquiètent pas de savoir s’ils empêchent un mutilé de monter avant eux; le conducteur part sans attendre le blessé qui peine à gravir le marchepied...” (Prost 24). While the body of amputees exemplify deep philosophical questions in regards to embodiment and the nature of reality, it is likely that the more mundane tasks of navigating public spaces and securing their dignity as war heroes were of a larger concern to them. The failures of institutions will be explored further in subsequent chapters, but here it demonstrates that even after the wounds were sutured shut, they persisted, extending beyond the mutilated body and exposing a society fractured from its past.

Chapter Two: Dissociated Doctors and Soul Brothers

The Great War Amputators

The increase in the number of amputations during the Great War increased the number of amputees. This tautology reveals an important aspect of the war since it is true that for every amputee there was an amputator. However, the question of the amputator differs from that of the amputee. Amputators do not suffer or face the same difficulties as the amputee, but nonetheless there are elements that are common to both. The fragmentation of the body engenders dissociative states of depersonalization and derealization as demonstrated in the previous chapter. Likewise, elements of dissociation are found within the practice of the amputator. In other words, during the Great War it was not uniquely through destroyed bodies that states of dissociation were incurred, but also through the act of destruction itself. There were two principal types of amputators present during the First World War: the doctor and the soldier. More precisely, the amputators were surgeons and soldiers, the soldiers in particular are those who were often referred to in unsavory terms such as: savage, barbarian, brute, or butcher. Both the soldier and the surgeon play a distinct part in their role as amputators and each displays elements of dissociation in their ways as well.

The surgeon, as a trained medical professional, has the aim of amputating a limb in order to save the life of his patient. Amputation itself is a long standing medical practice that is always a last resort after all other possibilities have been exhausted. In these dire circumstances it is best to have a knowledgeable professional be the one who performs the procedure. The professional attitude brought towards the practice of amputation may reflect in itself a sense of disassociation. As we see examples of medical professionals talking about the process of amputation during the war, it appears that there is a certain distance between soldier and surgeon. However, this

connection may be slightly lackluster. A clear link to states of depersonalization and derealization lies in the paraphernalia used by surgeons during the Great War. Anesthesia, while popularized a century prior, would be heavily relied upon in order to complete amputations in a way that was less painful for patients. Ether in particular was a popular anesthetic used on the front. The side effects of ether correspond to symptoms of depersonalization and derealization. Therefore, it is through professional distance and the use of drugs that the surgeon enters into a rapport between the fragmentation of the body and depersonalization.

Conversely, the soldier is an amputator given that, professionally speaking, it is their duty to inflict as much damage as possible onto the enemy. There are interesting questions pertaining to the First World War and the conscience of the soldier, usually due in part to the technology of the belligerent nations involved. With the use of machine guns and shells, there is a reduction in importance placed on the individual and his battle prowess, while much more emphasis is placed on the machine. A certain distance is installed between the soldier and the enemy that he kills, in other words, war becomes less intimate the further the distance is between the adversaries. The individual becomes less important, and this acts as an agent of dissociation by melting the individual into a mass of others. In rare cases, soldiers experienced a bloodlust, in which they acted more brutally than what is generally considered necessary for warfare. In these cases we often note that soldiers are not themselves and are seemingly possessed by something that caused them to act so violently. One case that deserves a closer look is author David Diop's novel *Frère d'Âme*, which skillfully ties together these various elements of the amputator and depersonalization.

Surgery

On the western front, around the same time that the Germans sank the British oceanliner RMS Lusitania, field medic Louis Maufrais was in Bagatelle/Argonne, May-July 1915. The French at this point are holding back the German advance, but suffering serious damage in the process. Due to the nature of these injuries sometimes amputation were immediately necessary:

En arrivant au dernier tournant, j'aperçois un pauvre blessé à plat ventre sur le chemin. Il avance par petits bonds en se soutenant du bras et du genou droit. Quant à la jambe gauche, elle paraît démesurément longue. En fait, elle est presque complètement sectionnée un peu au-dessus de la chaussure qui retient le pied et le rattachait au reste du corps. A chaque avancée, comme un élastique, son tendon tire sur la chaussure qui suit en grattant le sol. (Maufrais 110)

Maufrais kept a detailed journal of his experiences. His diary entries were compiled and published posthumously by one of his descendants. Throughout the journal, there is a high frequency of gore and suffering, sparsely including off-the-cuff amputations; although it was a common reality for soldiers on the front. The quotation above recounts one particular instance of this happening. Maufrais often complained about the lack of instruments he had in order to perform such operations: “Je prends dans ma poche une paire de ciseaux pliants , c’est tout ce que j’ai. Derrière lui, et sans rien lui dire, je lui coupe ce tendon pas plus gros qu’une ficelle” (110). Jacques Bitsch, a fellow soldier, corroborates the report of Maufrais by also writing about the same injured soldier. It is impressive to note that the amputee is described to have a certain calm about him after the loss of his foot. It was his ninth injury to date and this one did not seem to phase him much. He is described by Bitsch as having an untroubled mind; he says that the soldier had “une conscience très nette.” (110). A motor shell falls close to the tent and Bitsch

remembers it was the wounded man who seemed to care the least, “...lui seul est sans émotion” (110). Instead of reacting to the explosion, he states that he knows his foot is gone, but nonetheless it feels cold. Not only has the soldier's foot been detached, but also he seems to have been detached from himself, since he did not even react to an imminent threat. Despite his loss, Maufrais ordered him to be carried back to camp and he draws the attention of the amputee towards the silver lining, Maufrais says:

-Mon pauvre vieux, veux-tu voir ton pied?

- Oh ! non, j’y tiens pas, me répond-il, Ça ne doit pas être beau. Il me rendit de grands services, pourtant.

-Il t’en rend encore un autre aujourd’hui, parce que, grâce à lui, ta guerre est finie. Et puis tu verras, ce que je te dis est vrai, on va te faire un bon appareillage avec ce qui te reste, et tu auras une vie à peu près normale. (Maufrais 110)

This case of Maufrais represents an extreme one. A vast majority of amputations were not performed in the field, this only happened in rare circumstances. Most amputations were performed at a casualty clearing station (CCS) which acted as a triage to treat and evacuate the wounded. The diary of a field medic gets us close to the action and shows the importance of immediate medical intervention in the midst of war; without Maufrais who knows what would have become of this soldier. It may have been the case that if Maufrais did not act quickly then that soldier never would have made it to the CCS to be amputated. Amputations were an ordinary occurrence at the CCS, take for example the experience of Noram Pritchard whose time as a surgeon is described as “...serving on an assembly line of hacking and sawing” (Mayhew 48). The experiences of the field medic and the surgeon were different. Maufrais was charged with the immediate needs of the wounded and the transport of these soldiers to the CCS, where

the surgeons often made the hard decisions such as amputation. The differences between Maufrais and Pritchard are notable, especially the manner in which both men reflected on their experiences, inferring that Maufrais remembers his interaction with the soldier he amputated and feels compelled to recall the dialogue in his journal since it was an unusual occurrence for him. Pritchard, on the other hand, seems entirely overwhelmed by the quantity of amputations to record dialogues between himself and the soldiers. Surgeons were too few in number and were often overworked, they scarcely had time for anything and at all. Pritchard's experience of being on a hacking and sawing assembly line seems a reasonable metaphor when we consider his first few weeks as a surgeon of war:

He was rarely out of his surgical scrubs for the first two weeks. In his tent, late at night, he tried to write up his diary, to make sense of it all. On the third night, when he read it back to himself, he found that he had only written of the many dozens of amputations he had undertaken in the last few days. Field ambulances and RMOs had been ordered not to amputate except in extreme cases, so the decisions to sever limbs were almost all being made at the CCS by surgeons like Pritchard. Orderlies had been gathering up limbs like logs for the fire and taking them away. He had no idea what they did with them at No. 3. Was there a pit for burying human debris, or did they use an incinerator? (Mayhew 47-48)

Comparing his work to an assembly line corresponds with the industrial context of World War I, where the pace of work did not allow for considerable reflection. Pritchard's orderlies filled wheelbarrows of limbs, one after another, there was not much room for the intimacy that we glean from Maufrais's account of an amputation in the field. However, the removal of the limb was not the total weight of this heavy burden. The wounded would require care after the

amputation, for the obvious reasons such as avoiding infection and assuring proper rest, but also for more delicate reasons, namely dealing with the emotional and mental burden of losing a limb. This task would fall on the shoulders of the nurses. They too, were understaffed and overworked, but played a vital role in the saving of soldiers' lives. The work of the nurse was much more involved than the surgeon who saved the soldier and then quickly moved onto the next. The work of the nurse was one of care and diligence. The nurses were the first ones there when a soldier regained consciousness and had to reckon with the permanent physiological change to their body that saved their life, understandably this was a moment of particular emotional turbulence:

It was nurses who waited for a young soldier to wake up from an operation so that they could console him when he realized that his legs had been amputated. It was nurses who held the hand of a man whilst they guided him to a mirror so that he could see for the first time his empty pyjama sleeve, neatly folded and pinned up high where he had lost his arm. They carried a good supply of handkerchiefs at all times. Men cried in their arms until the fronts of their aprons were wet. And while a man cried, the nurses discreetly looked about the ward to see what else needed doing — where pillows had fallen or blankets had got tangled around broken limbs; who needed a drink or salve on dry chapped lips; who needed a smile and some reassurance. (Mayhew 65)

It cannot help but be noticed that in this poignant scene that the nurse diverts her attention to other matters. It speaks to the demands of labor that make attention sparse, but it also shows us a certain emotional distance on the part of the nurse: a defense mechanism of sorts, a somewhat calloused reaction to having repeatedly supported soldiers at their weakest moments. Giving in and fully empathizing with the soldier witnessing his own dismemberment for the first time may

have caused more damage than it was worth. It was better to turn, robotically, toward the tasks that needed completing. We can notice this type of distancing in all three of these examples: Maufrais, Pritchard and Kenyon - each one of them carrying a sense of disassociation. In the case of Maufrais we can say that he had both the job of the surgeon and the nurse, he amputated and consoled the soldier as he tried to remind him of the positives, but nonetheless the numbness and detachment of the soldier stains the account with spots of dissociation. Pritchard compares his medical practice to an assembly line, which is repetitive hypnotic work, inferring a type of dissociation, only after the fact wondering what happens to limbs after they are carted away. As for nurse Kenyon, comforting a soldier by holding his hand and giving him a shoulder to cry on, but simultaneously looking away, divesting the attention she has to give to other work tasks that are piling up around her. In these slight instances of detachment we glimpse some minor signs of depersonalization and derealization on the part of the amputator and those involved in the process. Dissociation in this way plays an important role: first, it allows for an emotional barrier to be installed between the patients and the surgeon, nurse, or orderly, a distance that is necessary to carry on despite horrendous circumstances. Secondly, it allows for a professional tone that is useful for historiography, which relies on coldness and quantitative figures in order to constitute a 'reality' of what happened. Such distance is often viewed as a virtue on the part of the medical professional, as is the case of Prosper Viguer, a surgeon during the war:

Son écriture froide, distanciée, technique nous fournit une mine de renseignements qualitatifs et quantitatifs qui sont le soubassement indispensable à toute recherche sérieuse en histoire, en ce qui concerne la réalité de ce qui fut cette nouveauté du début du XXe siècle : la mise en pratique de la mort de masse par des procédés industriels. Son effacement même met en lumière ceux qui sont l'objet de ses attentions, les combattants

anonymes, ceux qui souffrent et qui meurent sans laisser de traces, écrites ou autres.

(Bach 270)

The qualitative reality of hell-on-earth cannot not be ignored, but is often summed up in short sentences that quickly acknowledge the brutality of the event, for example “Les uns comme les autres surpris devant ce spectacle de corps désarticulés, spectacle auquel ils n’avaient absolument pas été préparés intellectuellement et moralement avant la guerre” (Bach 271). On both sides of the knife we see the usefulness of disassociation, amputators used these techniques for reasons that were bigger than themselves: to continue on with their work and to afford unbiased information to future generations who would like to fairly study the war. Dissociation was employed in other ways as well, in a manner that was embedded in the medical practice itself. The amputators of the Great War relied on their skills as medical professionals, but also on their tools and equipment. One of the tools at the disposal of surgeons in the CCS was anesthetics, in particular ether, a substance known to induce states of dissociation, akin to depersonalization and derealization.

Ether

The nascence of ether as an anesthetic occurred in the early nineteenth century; being a relatively new practice there were not many experts. In the beginning the CCS relied on a simple mask apparatus to deliver ether to a patient “In World War One ether was used as the anaesthetic agent of choice in the Casualty Clearing Stations and was often administered using equipment that was developed in 1877 by James Clover and although it has been modified in various ways, it is still in existence today” (Hawker 1). This system was not perfect, the proper administration of ether was not widely taught to medical workers at the beginning of the war. For instance,

within the first three days of its conception, the CCS at Gézaincourt saw 11,186 wounded soldiers, many of whom needed ether to undergo amputations, “This presence of casualties required the ‘anaesthetists’ to become sufficiently proficient and safe, something which self-education in the CCS could not provide” (Metcalf 650). British physician Sir Geoffrey Marshall saw to it that this problem would be resolved and developed a method in which anesthetics could be given effectively by those charged with treating the injured, which made leaps and bounds in the treatment of limb wounds: “We cut down the mortality from about ninety per cent [in thigh amputations] to something like twenty-five per cent” (Metcalf 652). The success of ether as an anesthetic is undeniable as it saved so many lives, however what often goes unacknowledged in the literature on this drug is its propensity to induce altered states such as depersonalization and derealization. Curiously, there are different layers of detachment to be examined in this piece of history. They are to be found in the wounded having their limbs detached permanently, while they would briefly be detached from themselves due to these effects of ether. A *mise en abyme* of dissociation. While it was not a necessary condition for a successful amputation, it did increase the likelihood of survival greatly to take leave of the pain inflicted on the physical body while undergoing the surgery. The physical body is said to evaporate, and the patient enters a dreamlike state.

During the *fin-de-siècle*, ether was a popular recreational drug in Europe. Ether flourished as an alternative to alcohol among students and the middle class looking to inebriate themselves, “Middle-class partygoers and medical students in both Europe and America frolicked under the influence of ether. More curiously, drinking ether was common in Europe and was particularly popular in Ireland, where the Catholic Church promoted abstinence from alcohol and asked people to pledge not to drink alcohol” (Schwarcz 129). The intoxicating

effects of ether were touted by many. Two prominent literary figures, Guy de Maupassant and Jean Lorrain who were well-known ether users, included ether in their writings which attests to a willingness to spread the knowledge of this drug.

Maupassant makes reference to ether often in his writings, the influence of the drug in his late life is nearly ubiquitous. One short story in particular, *Rêves*, is centered around ether and its effects. The description of ether's effects reflect important aspects of depersonalization and derealization, adding to the case that the techniques and tools of the amputator are invested in dissociation. Maupassant describing these effects writes of an evaporation of the body and a precipitation into a dreamlike state "Mon cher, pour rêver éveillé, il faut une grande puissance et un grand travail de volonté, et, partant, une grande fatigue en résulte...Ce rêve-là, je peux vous l'offrir, à condition que vous me promettiez de n'en pas abuser" (Maupassant). Ether, for Maupassant's narrator, offers a shortcut to a sweetness of waking dreams that is not easily achieved. The body is an obstacle for such states, and the dissipation of it is part of entering this dream-like reality⁸. The short story of Maupassant is an endorsement of the use of ether to combat ennui, a way to escape the humdrum of daily bourgeois life, just as many other drugs attempt to do. This numbing of the sense of an inner body is clearly useful for the anesthesia of patients who need to undergo an amputation. Ether and dismemberment would be paired together

⁸ The body is described by Maupassant as taking on the volatile properties of ether, it evaporates away, slowly unraveling the integrity of the body: "Au bout de quelques minutes, je crus entendre un murmure vague qui devint bientôt une espèce de bourdonnement, et il me semblait que tout l'intérieur de mon corps devenait léger, léger comme de l'air, qu'il se vaporisait" (Maupassant). The interior of the body being that which is dissipating is a curious way to describe the course of the drug. It relies on a mental schema of the body as having an interior. The significance of this is that it implies that it is a sense of self that is eroding, the interior of the body represents the parts of identity that are concealed and invisible under the skin, closer to the sense of self—however loosely it may be defined here.

in the Great War, but it is not only in this context that the two appear together, for instance, in *Sensations et Souvenirs* we see a merger of the two that is not in the medical milieu.

In his work, *Sensations et souvenirs*, Jean Lorrain writes two short chapters back-to-back that are a melange of amputation and dissociation : *Le Possédé* and *La Main Gantée*. These stories recount the anxieties and fears that have gripped a group of ether drinkers that account for Lorrain's narrators. In *Le Possédé* we learn of Serge's fear of 'reality' — a fear, or obsession, that is a trait of depersonalization and derealization:

...j'ai la terreur non plus de l'invisible, mais de la réalité...Ce sont les êtres en chair et en os rencontrés dans la rue, c'est le passant, c'est la passante, les anonymes même de la foule coudoyé qui m'apparaissent dans des attitudes de spectres, et c'est la laideur, la banalité même de la vie moderne qui me glacent le sang et me figent de terreur. (Lorrain 162-63)

Fear of the strangeness of reality and flesh are two tropes that appear ceaselessly in instances of depersonalization and derealization. Prolonged use of ether seems to be analogous to similar fears and anxieties as the depersonalized and derealized agent. The narrator in this section is plagued by a compulsive perception of animal features appearing on the faces of humans, perhaps the fear of flesh and reality fueled a paranoia that altered perception. Within these writings, there is always a lurking sense and suspicion that things are off and strange. In *La Main Gantée*, there is an instance of a man, who the narrator believes has a hand that is not his own, and his instinct proves to be correct. The suspicious man is dubbed the *singulier voyageur*. The narrator observes the peculiar difference between the body of the *singulier voyageur* and his gloved hand, and remains certain that this hand does not belong to him. This too is a trope often found in depersonalization: limbs apparently not belonging to an individual, although in general

it is autoscopic. Nonetheless, there is a sustained disbelief that the hand of the *singulier voyageur* is indeed his own, but if it is not his own, then whose arm is it? It turns out that the *singulier voyageur* was concealing an amputated hand, a freshly cut hand of a woman in his sleeve, that he leaves behind and the narrator discovers it, “...quelque chose de mou, je me baissai pour voir et trouvai sous mes doigts de la main, l’horrible main gantée démesurément longue et follement étroite, la main déjà froide, inerte et crispée que le somnambule avait oubliée” (Lorrain 178). Lorrain puts us into a space where we do not know if the nightmare is real or not. Whether these stories are just the vivid imagination of an ether drinker who sees animal faces in the visages of humans or a witness who sees a highly suspicious traveler who leaves behind an amputated hand he tried to pass off as his own. The blurring of reality due to drug use creates a horrorscape in Lorrain, a type of horror that carries distinctive markings of the work of both Maupssant and Lorrain. These themes written by ether abusers at the crepuscule of the Great War indicate, to a lesser extent, what was to come for those who were amputated, all the horror included.

Couper

The landscape of the war is nearly unrecognizable, as if these accounts of the war take place in a fictional apocalyptic world populated with holes and corpses. Here is an example from Blaise Cendrars describing the battlefield in *J’ai tué*:

Des membres volent en l’air. Je reçois du sang plein le visage. On entend des cris déchirants. On saute les tranchées abandonnées. On voit des grappes de cadavres, ignobles comme les paquets de chiffonniers; des trous d’obus, remplis jusqu’au bord comme des poubelles; des terrines pleines de choses sans nom, du jus, de la viande, des vêtements et de la feinte. Puis dans les coins, derrière les buissons, dans un chemin creux,

il y a les morts ridicules, figés comme des momies et qui font leur petit pompéï.

(Cendrars 16)

Cendrars would contribute to this hellscape by adding dead bodies to the scene. The Swiss author blends convention with new style in his telling of his war experience. The conventional way to write of war was to follow a single valiant protagonist and focus on his personal glory or deeds in battle. This emphasizes the idea of a hero, or a man who can turn the tides of a battle.

However, in mass industrial warfare, we see that there is no longer a single individual who is capable of making a huge difference in the face of artillery shells and machine gun fire, “Le héros classique est remplacé par une multiplicité de personnages, l’individu par une masse anonyme de soldats” (Mecke 129). Cendrars employs the third person singular pronoun *on* quite frequently throughout his text to underline the group aspect of the war : “on n’en voit pas bien la façade,” “on marche soudain sur une profonde litière de paille fraîche qui absorbe le bruit traînard des milliers et des milliers de godillots qui viennent,” “on n’entend que le frôlement des bras balances en cadence, le cliquetis d’une baïonnette, d’une gourmette ou le heurt mat d’un bidon” (Cendrars 6). By using this pronoun the narrator assimilates his own subjectivity into a mass that is making its way to the front. While other works of Cendrars, such as *J’ai saigné*, include more tell-tale signs of the World War One novel, such as the dialogue of multiple compatriots, *J’ai tué* does not have much of this apart from the lyrics of songs that the army sang together. However, *J’ai tué* de-centers the individual in other ways that are indicative of the genre, placing emphasis on the industrial processes that give rise to the technology of warfare:

Cette nouvelle forme de guerre ne peut plus être racontée selon les formes du récit héritées de la tradition littéraire. Elle entraîne une modification narrative considérable : la machinerie militaire anonyme destitue l’homme de son rôle traditionnel de sujet de

l'action pour prendre définitivement sa place et révolutionner, de ce fait, la relation entre homme et machine. Le dispositif technique est promu au rang de véritable actant d'une guerre qui assigne à l'homme un rôle subalterne. (Mecke 124)

Cendrars falls into this trend by broadly describing the processes of globalization that are responsible for equipping him with the necessary tools to kill his enemy. These processes are described by Cendrars as production at the cost of human labor, which is portrayed as a violent action, "Des femmes se crèvent dans les usines" (Cendrars 17). He is aware of the toll of human suffering in war production and of the toll the generation of these war tools takes on the earth as well "on a bouleversé les entrailles du globe et les mœurs; on a exploité des régions encore vierges et appris un métier inexorable à des êtres inoffensifs" (Cendrars 19), all of this to produce what the narrator is wearing and consuming on his march to kill the enemy. The ores are from Chile, the preservatives are from Australia, the leather from Africa, America sends the tools for machines, China the handcrafted objects, etc. In the eyes of Cendrars, the world works for him to produce the means necessary for him to kill a '*Boche*'. These aspects of the short story line up with the themes often found to be endemic to the World War One novel, yet Cendrars does take this opportunity to personalize his account, like the war stories of old.

The erasure of importance of the individual could be seen as a degree of depersonalization, as the individual lacks a sense of great importance. The more compelling form of depersonalization is found in the personalized description of the killing of the enemy, the titular action of Cendrars's work. Much like Lorrain, we see that in a moment of high stress that a narrator discovers what 'reality' truly is, as he is ready to leap to the offensive. Cendrars's narrator is clearly anxious, but he rallies up some courage telling himself: "Mon jeune passé sportif saura suffire. Me voici les nerfs tendus, les muscles bandés, prêt à bondir dans la réalité"

(Cendrars 20). Reality for Cendrars appears to be the hand-to-hand confrontation with the enemy, where the strongest survives and the other dies. Curiously, the idea of ‘reality’ crops up in these high-intensity situations where there is a large amount of anxiety and fear. Cendrars strikes, “Je saute sur mon antagoniste. Je lui porte un coup terrible. La tête est presque décollée. J’ai tué le Boche” (Cendrars 21). Just like that, the soldier becomes an amputator, or rather decapitator, disassembling his enemy. Cendrars equates this with reality: “J’ai le sens de la réalité. J’ai agi. J’ai tué” (Cendrars 21). This represents older descriptions of warfare insofar as it follows a single narrator and his actions, although it is not described very heroically. There is no great contest; there is no admiration for the skill of the enemy; it was quick and disorienting. Cendrars does not elaborate any further on what he means by ‘reality,’ and we are left with a succinct description of warfare that leaves much to be desired when the goal is to analyze interior states of being. *J’ai tué* was published in 1919, just a year after the end of the war. This new style of writing was just developing. The events of the war changed the way authors were considering literature through this process of de-centering the hero, so it is understandable that descriptions of detailed inner feelings that could be recognized as depersonalization would not necessarily be the focus of this rising genre. Especially during a time when so many veterans were dealing with complex psychological problems, it would have been too much perhaps to brave the trenches of the self in order to uncover unsettling feelings regarding dissociation. It has been shown that these veterans did experience deep trauma that often resulted in damage to their personalities:

Based on his clinical experiences during WWI at the Western Front, the American psychiatrist Thomas Ross described traumatic experiences as *breaking-points*, which is perhaps a better label than the metaphor of “trauma” as a wound: Something breaks in the

individual's psyche while he is being traumatized and experiences an emotional shock. In other words, a dissociation of his personality develops. (Van der Hart 2)

Therefore, the literature of the time period, written mostly by veterans, may be subject to repression and have an inability to explore these complex states of being. In years after the war it was found that hypnosis was a remedy that allowed soldiers to reintegrate parts of their personality back into themselves. There were varying degrees that described which part of the personality was damaged, and often it was very serious parts that left individuals nearly catatonic and unable to function in society. A less severe case, although, one that does directly implicate depersonalization and derealization in a clinical setting is, “The DSM-5 has explicitly included the possibility of the presence of negative “dissociative symptoms” of depersonalization and derealization, but this addition is far from adequate as it ignores the presence of positive dissociative symptoms...”(Van der Hart 4). Much healing would need to be done before authors such as Cendrars would be able to address these deep underlying reaches of the psyche. In fact, there is not much in the contemporaneous World War One literature that speaks directly to these states. In the very early days of the war these states were poorly understood, and often the damage to the psyche was extensive, it was known as war neurosis or shell shock.

Butcher

Archival footage from World War I—such as what can be viewed on the British Pathé website—shows the effects of war neurosis, colloquially known as shell shock, on soldiers during the Great War. Black and white images of former soldiers fill the screen with blank stares, uncontrollable tremors, and syncopated gaits that serve as the reminders of the mental toil of warfare. While these soldiers' symptoms appear to have an underlying physical cause, it is well

known that these injuries were mostly of the psychological variety. A large swath of those who participated in the First World War sustained such injuries. Even despite how brutal these injuries were, there was still hope for recovery. It was quite a polemic during the Great War as to whether or not these psychologically damaged soldiers should be used in the military corps once they were rehabilitated; “Tout au long de la guerre, on examine à plusieurs reprises les réformés et les exemptés, y compris ceux qui ont été placés dans cette position avant le conflit mais qui appartiennent aux classes encore soumises aux obligations militaires, ainsi que les hommes du service auxiliaire susceptibles de rejoindre des unités combattantes et les ajournés” (Derrien 21). In this vein, perhaps most revealing of the desperate need for troops, is an attempt to turn mentally unstable men into shock troops. *La société médico-psychologique*, 26 June 1916, designated a commission to come to a conclusion as to if delirious soldiers could be used in this manner, “Celle-ci présente ses conclusions un mois plus tard : soulignant les aptitudes combatives des ‘anormaux mentaux’, elle se déclare favorable à la création de ‘troupes de choc’, ‘prêtes à tout, capables d’une énergie peu commune, et susceptible de fournir des troupes d’assaut incomparables.’” (Derrien 28). Ultimately the idea was refuted, due to the unstable nature of the mentally unwell troops. In retrospect, it is shocking to think of using mentally damaged individuals in warfare. It can be interpreted as an attempt to amputate soldiers—who would otherwise have little use—from the military corps, something that allied leadership was often accused of. Attempts such as these call to mind unsavory opinions of those in command, instead of acting like respectable military commanders, they comported themselves more like butchers, dismembering carcasses to feed their war.

Such attempts to waste life did not go unnoticed: generals and officers were often to blame for the excessively high casualty rate, and one nickname does stick out in particular:

butcher. Two generals that were well known by this moniker were General Charles Mangin and Sir Arthur Currie. Sir Arthur Currie was Canada's general during the First World War. Currie garnered a successful reputation as one of the best generals during the conflict. His reputation was earned, but came at a price: opponents in the Canadian House of Commons, most notably Sir Sam Hughes, accused Currie of needlessly sending Canadian troops to the slaughter. Due to these accusations the wider Canadian public and some of those in the Canadian Government would label Currie as a butcher. Hughes wrote a letter to the Allied commanders and to the Canadian Prime Minister denouncing Currie as a butcher "I have on other occasions, drawn your attention to the massacres at Lens, Passchendaele, etc., where the only apparent object was to glorify the General in command, and make it impossible, through butchery, to have a Fifth and Sixth Divisions and Two Army Corps" (Cook 706-707). This was a serious charge, and one that Hughes would repeat on many occasions, quite regularly during and after the war period he "singled out Currie as a butcher, one so bent on his own glory that he would purposely slaughter his own men to block the formation of a Canadian Army"(Cook 707). Charles Mangin would similarly be accused by the press of being a wartime butcher. Pierre Audibert is credited with hailing Mangin as the butcher of the war, and once he was labeled as such the floodgates opened to many more horrifying names:

Les langues se délient à présent et la virulence des termes employés à son égard, soit lors de la réunion dans les organes de presse la relatant, sont révélateurs quant à l'ampleur de la déchirure : 'Mangin la guerre, le boucher de Verdun, le massacreur, l'amateur de charognes, le buveur de sang, le broyeur de Noirs, la canaille, la crapule, le bandit galonne, l'arracheur de dents, le virtuose de la mort' (Tison 64).

The imagery of the butcher stuck to generals, whether they deserved it or not. It appears that the atomization of the soldier as an indistinguishable entity in a large mass did not apply to those who were at the top. The large death tolls fell on the shoulders of those who were in charge, the generals. They came to be seen as cold and calloused leaders who sent their troops to a meaningless slaughter, detached from human decency.

While the literary writing style of the time period tended to de-center the soldier as the main protagonist, it did not get rid of the intrigue of an antagonist. More often than not, the central powers took on this role from the point of view of the allies, but Generals who made unpopular decisions were likened to butchers; a profession that specializes in severing meat from bone. Those in high command were the easy scapegoats to blame for a type of warfare that made the butchery of men all but inevitable. If a soldier, such as Cendrars, butchered an enemy, then it was at the behest of a general, so the guilt is diffused. Nonetheless, it was not only the generals that were committing atrocities, soldiers too, were undoubtedly guilty of this as well. David Diop's novel *Frère d'Âme* weaves together a narrative of the butcher soldier, with a main character that is an ideal representation of a depersonalized amputator. However the comparison of Mangin to a butcher made its way into this novel, when the main character, Alfa, reflects on his savagery during the war, "Même Mangin notre général serait fier de moi" (Diop 20).

Soul Brother

On the centennial of the armistice in 2018, David Diop published *Frère d'Âme*, a novel that, like *J'ai tué*, goes against the conventions of the World War One novel. Despite the fact that Diop's work mainly focuses on a single protagonist and does not assimilate the individual into the masses, it is quite eccentric in other ways. Thirty years after its conception, the *Prix Goncourt des Lycéens* was awarded to Diop for this work, along with the *Prix Renaudot* and the

Prix Médicis. The short popular critiques of the novel, for example from *Le Monde* and *Le Figaro*, capitalize on the anniversary of the war in their reporting. They also do not fail to point out the crucial role of the *tirailleurs* (West African military corps) for the allies in the First World War nor the pervasive violence and insatiable need for vengeance present within the novel. The purpose of these reviews, both released the same week Diop received the *Prix Goncourt des Lycéens* in late 2018, was to garner a wider audience for Diop's work. Despite this, the work has not received much critical attention, and this is surprising given the depth of some of the topics broached in the novel. The novel is rife with suffering, dismemberment, butchery, and dissociation.

The story centers around a hypermasculine protagonist: Alfa, and his unbelievable feats during the First World War. His dearest friend Mademba, his *plus que frère* as he puts it, is disemboweled and perishes slowly before his eyes. He sits with Mademba for an extended period of time as he begs for a merciful death. The regret and remorse of Alfa are palpable; “Ah ! Mademba Diop, mon plus que frère a mis trop temps à mourir. Ça a été très, très difficile, ça n'en finissait pas, du matin aux aurores, au soir, les tripes à l'aire, le dedans dehors, comme un mouton dépecé par le boucher rituel après son sacrifice.” (Diop 12). The death of Mademba deeply troubles Alfa and leads him to have strange thoughts, not to mention he goes on an unhinged amputation spree in his quest for revenge. Alfa perceives his role to be similar to the aforementioned psychologically damaged ‘shock troops’, we glimpse this through Alfa's perception of the command he is under and his understanding of the *tirailleurs* role in the war:

La France du capitaine a besoin que nous fassions les sauvages quand ça l'arrange. Elle a besoin que nous soyons sauvages parce que les ennemis ont peur de nos coupe-coupe. Je sais, j'ai compris, ce n'est pas plus compliqué que ça. La France du capitaine a besoin de

notre sauvagerie et comme nous sommes obéissants, moi et les autres, nous jouons les sauvages. Nous tranchons les chairs ennemies, nous estropions, nous décapitons, nous éventrons. (Diop 25)

The sequence of verbs *trancher*, *estriper*, *décapiter*, and *éventrer* indicate that Alfa ultimately views himself as a butcher as well. Furthermore, there are references to butchery shortly after the death of Mademba. Alfa fails to see Mademba's corpse as the deceased body of his *plus que frère*, instead he thinks, "Et dès que le silence s'est posé sur le champ de bataille baigné dans le sang, j'ai commencé à penser. Tu n'étais plus qu'un amas de viande morte" (Diop 16). This implies that a distance is being installed between Alfa and the corpse of his beloved friend. He sees him as nothing more than a heap of meat. It seems reasonable to say that by objectifying the body of Mademba, Alfa's ego is using a defensive tactic to protect him from a pungent trauma, depersonalizing him bit by bit. Not to mention that the word *viande* is in general reserved for meats that are consumed, although in an informal setting it can describe human flesh. Therefore, there is at the very least a play of words that points back towards the metaphor of the butcher. Likewise, the word butcher can also carry a figurative meaning in French: it can indicate someone who has bloodlust. Alfa regrets his choice not to act as the butcher for his brother in need. He showed no mercy and let Mademba die a long and agonizing death. His regret turns towards the conditional past, "Par la vérité de Dieu, si j'étais déjà devenu celui que je suis maintenant, je l'aurais égorgé comme un mouton de sacrifice, par amitié" (Diop 13). His revenge is brutal, he goes out each night behind enemy lines to mutilate a German soldier and bring back his hand and rifle. At the outstart the success of Alfa's revenge is applauded by his comrades, although the celebration turns grim when his bloodlust is not abated, "Mais au bout de la quatrième main ennemie ils n'ont plus ri franchement" (Diop 41). These atrocious acts of Alfa

outstrip the purview of butchery, in fact Alfa himself begins to question if his acts extend beyond that of a butcher, into something perhaps even more malignant. Diop makes use of repetition in reference to the figure of the butcher to highlight the gore of the war, but also to underline the folklore figure of the *dëmm* (soul-eater). There is a tension in the novel as to whether or not Alfa is a *dëmm* or not, something Alfa himself cannot quite figure out:

De là à penser que je suis un *dëmm*, un dévoreur d'âmes, il n'y a presque pas d'écart, de chemin. Comme je pense tout ce que bon me semble désormais, je peux tout m'avouer à moi-même dans le secret de mon esprit. Oui, je me suis dit que je devais être un *dëmm*, un mangeur du dedans des gens. Mais je me suis dit, aussitôt après l'avoir pensé, que je ne pouvais pas croire une chose pareille, que ce n'était pas possible. Là, ce n'était pas moi qui pensais vraiment. (Diop 53)

The depersonalization within Alfa deepens in instances like this, the evidence is in his indeterminate internal dialogue '...ce n'était pas moi qui pensais vraiment.'. His own personal monologue begins its descent into unfamiliarity, and he begins to question the provenance of something as hyper-personal as an interior monologue. While Alfa vacillates between accepting he is a *dëmm* and denying it, he does make it clear that others believe him to be a *dëmm*; his fellow soldiers believe him to be one as do the people of his home village, Gandiol, who tried to warn Mademba before going to Europe to fight the war:

Par la vérité de Dieu, les mauvaises gens de Gandiol ont décidé de nous séparer en racontant déjà à Mademba que j'étais un *dëmm*, que je mangeais sa force vitale petit à petit dans son sommeil. Ces gens de Gandiol ont dit à Mademba - je l'ai appris de la bouche de Fary Thiam qui nous aimait tous les deux -, ils ont dit : « Vois comme Alfa

Ndiaye est florissant de beauté et vois comme tu es maigre et laid. C'est lui qui absorbe toutes tes forces vitales à ton détriment et à son profit, car c'est un *dëmm*, un dévoreur d'âmes sans pitié pour toi. Abandonne-le, ne le fréquente plus, sinon tu cours à ta pulvérisation. Le dedans de ton corps va s'assécher pour devenir poussière! » (Diop 109)

So as far as we can tell from Alfa, the only thing we need to know about *dëmm* is that they eat the souls of others. To be butchered in war is a harrowing experience. Amputees undergo massive changes, from the changes in their bodies to the changes in their psychology. The figure of the *dëmm* is a soul-eater, in a way that reflects metaphorically how the soul of a soldier is eaten by the loss of a limb. We also see clearly that the *dëmm* or butcher figure represents the amputator, who similarly suffers from states of dissociation like the amputee, Alfa pays this toll in the novel, as we note he begins to lose himself piece by piece as he descends further into a state of dissociation.

Alfa is ultimately reprimanded by a captain for his nocturnal excursions to amputate unsuspecting German soldiers "Ta façon de faire la guerre est un peu trop sauvage. Je ne t'ai jamais donné l'ordre de couper des mains ennemies ! Ce n'est pas réglementaire. Mais je ferme les yeux parce que tu es croix de guerre"(Diop 91). Alfa is forced to take leave of the front, there is seemingly no way for Alfa to improve his condition. Alfa arrives at a total loss of purpose, he has lost his dearest friend and his chance to avenge him is taken away. Racked with guilt and lacking purpose the symptoms of depersonalization and derealization present themselves quite clearly, literature scholar Anna Branach-Kallas points to this poetics of excess as a possible expression of depersonalization in the midst of war: "It thus becomes clear that the *dëmm* is a central point of reference in Diop's macabre poetics of excess, which highlights gruesome acts of injury and disembowelment. Additionally, as Visser contends, many trauma symptoms, such as

survivor guilt, seem to be universal, yet they ‘translate in specific forms of altered self-perception or even depersonalization’” (Branach-Kallas 11). As Branach-Kallas recognizes depersonalization is at work in the text, we can note how it plays into the climax of the novel. The guilt and remorse that Alfa feels towards Mademba is reconciled through the transfer of Mademba’s soul into Alfa’s body, the ultimate negation of the self and replacement by another. This aspect of the plot is highly reminiscent of descriptions of the depersonalized state; feeling like a stranger in one’s own body. While the trauma of war seems to be an adequate explanation for engendering the depersonalized state; the novel does an excellent job to show that the relationship between them was vital and emotionally charged for Alfa. Extending beyond the raw violence of Mademba’s murder, we must also take into account their journey together, explaining how they ended up in the French Army.

Diop gives us a glimpse of Mademba and Alfa’s life before the war; Alfa was content in Senegal, but Mademba wanted more. His ambition is laid out quite bluntly : “Mademba voulait devenir un grand quelqu’un à Saint-Louis, un citoyen français: ‘Alfa, le monde est vaste, je veux le parcourir. La guerre est une chance de partir de Gandiol. Si Dieu le veut, nous reviendrons sains et saufs. Quand nous serons devenus des citoyens français, nous nous installerons à Saint-Louis. Nous ferons du commerce. Nous deviendrons des grossistes et nous fournirons en denrées alimentaires toutes les boutiques du nord du Sénégal, y compris celle de Gandiol!’ (Diop 137). Initially, this is a goal that both Alfa and Mademba work towards, although it remains clear that it is Mademba’s ambition. Mademba is rejected from the French army at first due to his small stature and frail constitution, however, Alfa is a ‘force of nature’ and helps train Mademba to put on weight and gain strength so that the army will accept him. The second try is successful and they are both accepted by the French military. Ironically, the reward of being admitted into

the army is ultimately what leads to Mademba being disemboweled by a system that had little to no appreciation for him.

The contextualization of the fraternal bonds between Alfa and Mademba underscore for the reader how traumatic his death was for Alfa. Having sacrificed so much and having gained so little, Alfa turns toward violence to take what he is owed. However, this violence only hollows him out further; it does nothing to bring back Mademba or alleviate Alfa's guilt. Something much more dramatic is needed, something commensurate with the struggle they endured. I contend that the depersonalization of Alfa leads to an erasure of his personality, leaving a door open for the soul of Mademba to inhabit Alfa's body.

Transferring the soul of one character into the body of another is a tricky literary practice: there are no guides for writing such an event. Diop writes the transfer as a state of confusion, which lines up with feelings of depersonalization:

Où suis-je ? Il me semble que je reviens de loin. Qui suis-je ? Je ne le sais pas encore.
Des ténèbres m'enveloppent, je ne distingue rien, mais je sens peu à peu de la chaleur me prêter vie. J'essaie d'ouvrir des yeux qui ne sont pas les miens, de bouger qui ne m'appartiennent pas, mais qui m'appartiendront tout à l'heure, je le pressens. Mes jambes sont là ... Tiens, je sens quelque chose sous mon rêve de corps. (Diop 155)

What jumps out immediately is the loss of identity *Qui suis-je?* followed by the sentiment that the eyes do not belong to whoever is seeing with them. The other powerful metaphor that implies a dissociative episode is *mon rêve de corps*, which encapsulates the experience of depersonalization as apprehending the body as unreal. Nothing speaks to this aspect more than when the narrator says, "C'est quand même drôle d'avoir l'impression d'être étranger à son

propre corps” (Diop 158). As the confusion dissipates, the narrator slowly tries to realize his situation. We are confronted by objective observations of the body so, in this moment, the reader is discovering the body of the narrator along with the narrator, “Mon corps essaie de parler par ma bouche. Je ne sais pas qui je suis, mais je crois savoir ce que mon corps peut dire de moi. L'épaisseur de mon corps, sa force surabondante ne peuvent signifier dans l'esprit des autres que le combat, la lutte, la guerre, la violence et la mort” (Diop 164). We not only share the moment of revelation of the body with the narrator, we also share his confusion. It is not until we get these descriptors that speak to the vigor of the body that we can understand that it is Alfa's body. The definitive revelation of this fact is saved for the last page of the novel:

Mais à présent que j'y pense profondément, maintenant que je me retourne sur moi-même, par la vérité de Dieu, je sais, j'ai compris qu'Alfa m'a cédé une place dans son corps de lutteur par amitié, par compassion. Je sais, j'ai compris qu'Alfa a entendu la première supplication que je lui ai lancée du tréfonds de la terre à personne, le soir de ma mort. Parce que je ne voulais pas rester seul au milieu de nulle part sous une terre sans nom. Par la vérité de Dieu, je te jure qu'à l'instant où je nous pense, désormais lui est moi et moi suis lui. (175).

When asked by *La Grande Librairie* if he thinks that it is possible to reincarnate, Diop says yes, he states that we can incorporate lost loved ones through guilt, he says at least through literature this is possible, “par une forme de schizophrénie c'est tout à fait possible, on peut récupérer, incorporer peut-être, en effet, un disparu par souffrance, par un tel nostalgie de sa perte et tel sentiment de culpabilité, qu'on peut-être – en tout cas la littérature le permet – l'intégrer” (11:56-12:20). Depersonalization is not a form of schizophrenia, but it is understandable how such a fracture in reality could be interpreted as such. Alfa's reality is first fractured by the

sudden violent death of his dearest friend. Subsequently, Alfa's reality suffers further fissures through his course of action to avenge his friend: the severance of seven arms from German soldiers. These acts of excessive violence were part of the Great War, the use of new technologies did install distance between soldiers, making the war more impersonal than a majority of the preceding wars of the nineteenth century. However, there are still accounts where soldiers engaged in hand to hand combat, such is the case for *J'ai tué*, and in these instances we note that there are some questions surrounding 'reality.' Alfa's questions of reality sink to such a level that he questions his human nature in and of itself, he starts to consider the possibility that he is a soul-eater. Ultimately, he dissociates entirely from his own personality, as he gives up a spot in his body for the soul of Mademba to inhabit. In this novel, guilt and violence are forces that shake the foundation of reality and allow for an erasure of the self which can be replaced by another. It is not only the amputee that suffers from personality troubles, but also those who amputate.

Chapter Three : Prosthetic Limbs and Memory

Physical Prosthetic

The amputators of World War One left in their wake a host of broken and battered amputees. The lost limbs of veterans were haunted by the phantom limbs of what once was, searching metaphysically for a new shell to take up as a home. They would find shells, in the form of prosthetic limbs that were artisanally crafted en mass after the war. A doubling of ‘unrealness’ occurs since the phantom limb would find its home in an artificial, in other words ‘unreal’ vessel; a mechanical imitation of a limb. These artificial limbs were meant to alleviate some of the difficulties associated with mobility in amputees, with the aim of re-integrating them into the workforce and social life. Thoughts of a new type of being emerged; with the combination of man and prosthetic, it was time to reflect on the role of technology in association with the body. The artistic representations from the period are particularly striking and offer a direct look at how the body was dismembered in reality and in portrayal. It was unclear during the period whether the general public thought prosthetics were going to have a positive impact or negative impact on human development. The argument is an old one: in one camp, we see that adding technology to the body would greatly improve our natural capacities, while in the other camp, this technology was seen as detracting from our natural capacities by unnecessary supplementation that would make humans reliant on technology.

What qualifies as a prosthetic is a profound question which has multiple explanations, all of which appear valid in their own right. If we take the term prosthetic to solely mean an addition to the body, then the use of tools could be considered prosthetic. Tools are auxiliary attachments that enhance the function of our existing limbs: a hammer is a solid hand that can pound in nails, a shovel is a pointed arm that can dig holes more efficiently, or a stick is an extended arm that

can reach higher hanging fruit, etc. However, if we permit everything to be defined as prosthetic then we lose its meaning. The definition must be limited in this study in order to make a germane investigation of World War One. For the purposes of this analysis, a prosthetic is an apparatus that is intended to replace a formerly present body part, usually a limb, in order to restore functionality to the individual. There are, of course, other ways of thinking of prosthetics. Helena De Preester provides three insightful categories of prosthetics that evoke provocative and relevant questions in relation to the Great War. The three types of prosthetic she lists are as follows:

- (1) Technologies that primarily aim at altering our *motor* capacities, called limb prostheses or limb extensions.
- (2) Technologies that primarily aim at altering our *sensory* capacities, called perceptual prostheses or perceptual extensions.
- (3) Technologies that primarily aim at altering our *cognitive* capacities, called cognitive prostheses or cognitive extensions. (De Preester 121).

These working definitions afford us the ability to take examples from the period that fit these definitions, and from there we can unravel deeper questions cached within the prosthetic conversation. In regards to WWI, limb prosthetics offer the most evident and accessible means of study. Cognitive prosthetics, I will argue, are also part of the study of war prosthetics, albeit in a socially prosthetic way that I will develop later. There are many examples that show how limb extensions were marketed to veterans, and there is also ample evidence to see the goals that were put forth through the reeducation and reintegration of prosthetic users back into society. In general, they returned to industrial or farm work. In terms of cognitive prosthetics, we can turn to

artwork and writings of the period in order to formulate a hypothesis of how these representations could be indicative of cognitive extensions.

Mobility Prosthetics

The mass loss of limbs points to prosthetics that can be categorized under the aim to restore motor capacities. The *Journal des mutilés, réformés, et blessés de guerre* was a popular journal for amputees and users of prosthetic limbs during and after the First World War. The journal consists of advice for amputees who are seeking employment, medical advice, legal advice, relevant advertisements, etc. Ads for prosthetic limbs figure among them, and they blend language of anatomy and machinery together in order to sell them as replacement parts. Interestingly enough, the marketing technique uses language concerning the ‘reality’ of the product. For example, the description of a prosthetic leg in *numéro du 6 Mai 1916* is an example of how these two vocabularies come together to market artificial body parts: “Les dispositifs absolument inédits et exclusifs des articulations du genou et du pied, et notamment le nouveau **verrou bilatéral et l’EXTENSEUR AUTOMATIQUE...**” (breveté S.G.D.G; emphasis in original)(12, see fig. 1). The words *genou* and *pied* are references to human anatomical features of the leg, which the prosthetic attempts to replicate and replace, however it blends these with common device vocabulary such as the *verrou bilatéral*, capitalized and bolded in the original ad along with *extenseur automatique*. The emphasis on the technological aspects of the prosthetic bring the customers attention to the uniqueness and quality of the product put forward here by the company *Natura*, whose very name hints to something that is “natural” even though the company is an artificial limb specialist. Artificial and natural seem to be at odds with each other within the advertisement. Even among artificial limbs themselves there seem to be varying

degrees of ‘real’ and ‘artificial,’ reworded in this particular ad as ‘serious’; implying there are prosthetics that are ‘not serious,’ “recommandée par les sommités médicales et chirurgicales, elle doit être adoptée par tous les amputés voulant se munir d’un appareil **véritablement sérieux** qui, par sa perfection, leur permettra de trouver, entre leur membre vivant et leur prothèse, **le moins de différence possible**,...”(12), again the bolded font appears in the original advertisement. The ability to camouflage the prosthetic also seems to add to its seriousness, for it to be undetectable to others. So, in this sense, concealment becomes serious business, as the advertisement’s subtitle illustrates “à armature entièrement dissimulée.” This underlines the notion that, for the prosthetic to be quality, then it must be mimetic as well as easily hidden.

Within the realm itself of prosthetic replacement parts, we see a redivision of the definition of what has proper purchase on the word prosthetic. This is because, in an attempt to market their prosthetics, they play down the effectiveness of other prosthetics by claiming that they are not ‘serious.’ The insinuation is that, if you are serious about your replacement leg, then you will purchase a leg from *Natura*. Furthermore, the advertisement says that the *Natura* leg will provide the least amount of differences between prosthetic and a living limb, suggesting that seriousness is tied to the ability to replicate and replace that which is missing. Implying that the *Natura* prosthetic is more ‘real’ and that ‘real’ is ‘serious’ and, therefore, more valuable than something that is deemed ‘artificial’ or ‘unreal.’ These distinctions are ubiquitous in the dialogue on the prosthetic and the waters get muddy quickly.

• POUR LES AMPUTES •

JAMBE NATURA



à flexion automatique (brevetée S.G.D.G.)
à armature entièrement dissimulée.

Ce nouveau modèle, entièrement moulé en Fibre laquée "NATURA" constitue la jambe artificielle la plus perfectionnée qui existe au monde, car il réalise le **maximum** de solidité avec le **minimum** de poids.

Les dispositifs absolument inédits et exclusifs des articulations du genou et du pied, et notamment le nouveau **Verrou bilatéral** et l'**EXTENSEUR AUTOMATIQUE** (breveté S.G.D.G.), dans les cas d'amputation de la cuisse, assurent à ce merveilleux appareil une stabilité et un fonctionnement parfaits ainsi qu'une solidité garantie à l'épreuve du temps et de la fatigue.

Souple, légère, silencieuse, imputrescible, imperceptible sous les vêtements, trois fois plus durable à l'usage que les modèles ordinaires, la jambe artificielle "NATURA" permet une marche facile, souple, assurée, normale.

Recommandée par les sommités médicales et chirurgicales, elle doit être adoptée par tous les amputés voulant se munir d'un appareil **véritablement sérieux** qui, par sa perfection, leur permettra de trouver, entre leur membre vivant et leur prothèse, le **moins de différence possible**,

*Lire l'intéressante Brochure illustrée sur la Jambe "NATURA" (2^e édition)
adressée gratuitement sur demande ainsi que tous conseils et renseignements par*

MM. G. BOS & L. PUEL, 234, Faubourg St-Martin, PARIS
Orthopédistes brevetés des Établissements Clavierie (Angle de la rue Lafayette)

Tél. Nord 03-71 Essais et renseignements tous les jours, même Dimanches et Fêtes, de 9 h. à 7 h. Métro ; Louis-Blanc

**Bras artificiel "NATURA" ET TOUS APPAREILS
d'ORTHOPÉDIE & PROTHÈSE**

Figure 1: [Prosthetic leg advertisement]. Source: *Journal des mutilés, réformés et blessés de guerre*, May 6, 1916, page 12. Bibliothèque nationale de France / gallica.bnf.fr

The goal of regaining function underlines how much our body contributes to a sense of identity. In fact, amputees who lack this ability to complete daily functions often suffer from problems of identity. They may feel as if their previous intact self is not the same as their new prosthetic user self. If it is not the same, then there is the risk that the self can fall into this problem of not feeling "real," just as the prosthetic itself is not perceived as genuine, or "serious," then the self may not be seen as genuine either. Given that the amputee is unable to fully incorporate the prosthetic into their subjectivity, there is a real risk that this part of them will not feel real. The prosthetic limb bears a resemblance to the body in image alone; it also

bears a resemblance to the objects that populate the environment of the prosthetic user, creating a kinship between space and the amputee vis-a-vis their prosthetic. This relationship suggests that they could experience what Roger Caillois calls a depersonalization through assimilation to space. He articulates this in his article “Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia,” claiming that a schizophrenic is prone to this experience, “He is similar, not similar to something, but just similar. And he invents spaces of which he is ‘the convulsive possession.’ All these expressions shed light on a single process: depersonalization by assimilation to space,...” (Caillois 30). While Caillois’s interpretation differs from the case of the mobility prosthetic in regard to their mental salubrity, it nonetheless provides an avenue to understand how space can subsume the personality of an individual; a condition that amputees use prosthetics meet the parameters for due to their damaged subjectivity.

The undeniable major change in body integrity after the loss of a limb is well documented. Author Blaise Cendrars, who lost his arm in WWI, writes about how his corporeal integrity was damaged when his arm was lost in his work *J’ai Saigné*, “Cette pensée m’était abominable, et pour ne pas me sentir corporellement diminué par l’amputation de mon bras droit, après quelques jours d’hospitalisation et dès que j’avais pu me mettre sur mon séant, tous les matins, à l’aube, je boxais un petit quart d’heure dans mon oreiller. Mon bras saignait abondamment, mais je n’en tenais pas compte, surmontant la douleur pour porter des coups redoublés et de plus en plus vite avec mon moignon”(Cendrars 35). It appears that the narrator of Cendrars’s short novel is compensating for the loss of his arm by engaging in virile activity such as boxing with his diminished extremity. He is doing so in order to regain part of his identity as a functioning individual. In the novel, he heals quickly because of his determination and attributes his quick recovery to his mental state of not allowing himself to feel handicapped, “...j’attribuais,

moi, à la boxe d'autres vertus, et plus particulièrement celle, toute mentale, de me rendre la notion, sinon de mon intégralité, du moins de mon équilibre corporel" (Cendrars 36). It appears that in real life as well Cendrars was resolute to adapt to his new life as an amputee. More precisely, as an amputee without need for a prosthetic. According to Bernard Morlino, a writer for *Le Figaro*, Cendrars was not in favor of using a prosthetic, in fact he abandoned it completely, "Refusant la prothèse, il abandonna le bras artificiel à la consigne d'une gare" (Morlino). In the novel, the narrator goes on to make a quick recovery and does all sorts of balancing exercises with his amputated arm, even learning to juggle with it. The mental reinforcement and sheer will to persevere through this type of trauma is extremely rare. That is because the possibility of slipping into melancholy is a real danger for an amputee. Often the physical damage is not as painful as the damage done psychologically to the identity of the individual who finds themselves in a new body almost instantly. In Cendrars, this identity shock was countered by an indomitable will. This being the exception only reinforces the position that the body is rendered unfamiliar, in a similar manner to how the body of the individual with depersonalization is rendered unfamiliar. It takes a large effort to recover from this. For most, there is a painful gap between how the body used to be and how it is now :

Entre le désir de continuer à être et le constat que l'on n'est plus soi-même il y a un abîme ; beaucoup plus qu'une rupture. A tel point que sa propre identité peut paraître illusoire : la certitude de demeurer soi (l'ipséité) est sans cesse infirmée par l'impossibilité de retrouver ses capacités physiques, sa place sociale et parfois le lien avec ses proches. Quel est ce soi que l'on va désormais investir ? Le risque mélancolique est ici présent, il y a là une perte de repère identitaire : le sentiment de ne plus rien valoir, de ne plus être soi, voire de ne plus rien être du tout. (Ancet, par. 3)

The case of Cendrars is very atypical, as he suffered a small gap between who he was prior to his amputation and who he became afterwards post amputation. He took it upon himself to resume a life as normal as possible without a prosthetic, which is very admirable and an awesome demonstration of will. However, it should be stated that most individuals will benefit from the use of a prosthetic, and there is no shame in using one. As crucial as a sense of self may appear to be for a healthy individual, it was only one in a long list of worries for a wounded veteran. The use of a prosthetic limb is not something that is innate, or, for that matter, easy to learn. It is a skill that requires time and practice to master. Indeed, it is hard to imagine a society that would amputate soldiers and then shortly thereafter send them home and hope they can cope appropriately with these new and profound changes. Long stays in the hospital were common before being sent to a reeducation center, to learn to use a prosthetic,

Le mutilé, après des séjours en hôpital, puis dans des centres de rééducation où il apprend à manier sa prothèse, doit pouvoir réintégrer le corps social non pas comme un inapte ou un inadapté, mais comme un individu fonctionnel. L'on est encore dans les suites immédiates de la révolution industrielle et l'individu se conçoit comme partie d'un tout, même si la guerre lui a coûté un membre. (Gorin 6)

Not to detract from Cendrars, but the reality is that he had a profession that certainly allowed him to continue without a prosthetic; as an artist and writer, he could afford to forgo the prosthetic. For a majority of wounded veterans, who were unskilled laborers, they would seek reintegration into the industrial workforce, generally in the factory or on a farm. Therefore, they required a specific education, actually a re-education. In fact re-education centers were opened around France in order to help wounded soldiers ease back into civil life. Given the sheer number of the wounded who were in need of such services, it was a gargantuan task which often came up short.

Les Anciens Combattants by Antoine Prost consistently points out the preoccupation of income for mutilated soldiers that were not able to return to the workforce in the same capacity as before the war, before their injuries. The timing of the war is imperative to understanding how the mutilated soldier was viewed. Western society, and especially France, is experiencing the tail end of industrializing the nation. During this period, the individual is taking on the role of one cog in a larger machine that produces the necessary materials for a functioning society. Not only does the industrial complex need functional workers in order to produce its goods, but it also appears that the workers need to participate in production in order to feel useful and part of the community, to have a complete sense of identity. Therefore, a major focus of those with prosthetics was how they were going to contribute to a mobile and industrial society despite their losses. In order to find work, these former soldiers were reeducated and reformed for the workforce, although for most the aid for placement into a career often came up short:

Mais le placement supposait souvent une rééducation préalable. L'infirmité du mutilé lui interdisait de reprendre son ancien métier. Bien que le service de santé, des municipalités, des chambres de commerce et des institutions privées d'aide aux blessés aient créé de nombreuses écoles de rééducation, elles restaient très insuffisantes. Au premier janvier, elles accueilleraient au total 1 746 réformés. L'office s'efforça de les développer. Sous son impulsion, 2 846 mutilés étaient en rééducation au 30 juin 1916. Le nombre total des mutilés rééduqués passa de 2 500 en 1915 à 9 000 en 1916, puis à 17 500 et 24 000 en 1917 et 1918. C'était cependant encore trop peu, et l'Office chercha à développer une formule plus souple et moins onéreuse en encourageant la rééducation chez un patron par une allocation d'apprentissage. (Prost 22)

Given the shortcomings of the programs, it should have been seen as a political blunder. However, this is not the narrative that was pushed forward. During the years between 1916-1918, the war was still in full swing and, therefore, the government and military did not want to publicize the dismal truth of the fate that awaited those who were mutilated in war. There existed distinct separations of the access of information in regards to these injuries. We would expect that access to information would only have increased as technology advanced. The most notable invention in this vein would have been the photograph.

Cameras were widely used during the First World War. Understandably, images of severe wounds were relegated to medical use only, “Toutefois, ces images restent de l’ordre du médical et ne sont pas diffusées en dehors des manuels sanitaires et chirurgicaux. La presse a, pour son compte, adopté l’engouement patriotique et s’efforce de suivre l’effort de guerre en évitant la démoralisation de l’arrière” (Gorin 6). The dissemination of images thought to demoralize the public were kept out of the media surrounding the war. It is clear that the censorship around images was not all-encompassing; photographs could also be used to boost morale. It would have been negligent to try and avoid the sharp rise in war amputees, who after successful reintegration, would be seen in public life. So, there were attempts to try and show the positive side of these attempts to rehabilitate the injured. For the minority who were able to complete their re-education and enter the workforce again, it was a political opportunity to show off their success. By taking photographs of rehabilitated workers, it could be framed as a triumph for the state. This completed at least two tasks: it showed that those who participated in the war were taken care of, and it also showed that individuals who lost limbs were capable of resuming a normal life. Through this, the government did not have to ignore the reality of amputees; they

were portrayed as a benevolent caregiver who helped those who paid a huge price for the country be able to provide for their family through the sweat of their brow after their service.

In order for this message to be communicated, some photographs were taken in professional settings. Many details were taken into consideration with the aim of getting the message just right: “Cela explique notamment une partie des images prises dans des milieux professionnels, où l’angle est élargi cette fois au mutilé et son lieu de travail. Il s’agit bien souvent d’une usine, dans laquelle le handicapé est exposé face à la machine qu’il va devoir manier. Pour pallier à son handicap, une prothèse spécifique a été adaptée au geste mécanique que le mutilé va devoir effectuer ; ainsi, la prothèse se termine par un crochet, une pince, des ciseaux, que l’individu sera apte à faire fonctionner pour intégrer à nouveau la chaîne de montage” (Gorin 6). This serves as an example for a victory of the state. The image represents a lot for the nation at the time: it shows the sacrifice of the soldier, but also puts on display the ability for a soldier to sacrifice and recover, and to recover in an industrial setting, so that the individual can be rehabilitated while simultaneously reconstructing the nation that is left in tatters after the war. For example, the following image (fig. 2) adds credence to the desire of the state to valorize industry and veterans: “Tout dans cette image est conçu pour valoriser et redonner une dignité au mutilé de guerre : il est présenté comme un individu actif, un travailleur toujours capable de s’assumer seul et de participer à la vie sociale, comme en témoigne le choix de le montrer en plein travail, concentré sur son ouvrage” (Le Thomas - Histoire par l’image). The return of the soldier to the factory is a symbolic win for the state; that is one interpretation of it. However, there is a bit of a more cynical reading of these images as well. The return of the soldier to the factory is ironic insofar as it returns the soldier back to a space that was used to assemble the parts to engender their own dismemberment.



Figure 2. [A wounded war veteran at work with a prosthetic limb, ca. 1916]. Source: *L'histoire par l'image*, “Invalides de guerre et centres de rééducation.”

<https://histoire-image.org/etudes/invalides-guerre-centres-reeducation>

This provides a curious moment to analyze the different levels of dismemberment occurring in this historical moment in France. The medium of photography itself is in the business of dismemberment. The camera is a device that catches parts of a whole. For instance, it is possible to photograph an entire city at once, such as a bird's eye view, but you will lose many details of the city and may not even know which city it is from such a strange perspective.

During this time period, photography is an art medium that is capable of evoking the strange, according to Mary Bergstein, “This ‘making strange’ or ‘making magnificent’ of the familiar, and guiding interpretation according to a point of view are hallmarks of modernist photography throughout the twentieth century” (Bergstein 318). If one was inclined to capture a less strange representation of said city then they would need a large quantity of photos; photographs from a predictable perspective which captured signs, traffic signals, buildings, people, etc. This group of photos would then be considered as a body of work. A body as such is fragmented by definition, meaning that the photos are separated from one another but add up to one whole. The trope of fragmentation or amputation practically becomes a *mise en abyme* in these incredibly particular instances: the photographing of a re-educated amputee working in a factory. We have already seen in detail the extent to which an individual is fractured both physically and psychologically by the loss of a limb leading to a sense of depersonalization and derealization. Furthermore, they have their picture taken which in itself imposes another layer of depersonalization and derealization, in at least two probable ways. First, if a photographer employs a style that produces a strange take on the subject then the subject has been derealized or depersonalized through this strangeness. The hallmark of the style of the period making the familiar into strange, is unavoidably related to instances of depersonalization and derealization by definition. Secondly, if the case is that many photographs are taken, then the entire body of photographs are disjointed from one another and their meaning is reinforced through their relation to one another. This creates a unique opportunity for photos to engender something oddly curious in the collective consciousness, as Bergstein claims that photographs have the quality of creating instances of derealization, “Photographs can provoke psychological subjectivity as the sensation of *deja vu* or *fausse reconnaissance* and its illusory opposite “derealization”” (Bergstein 308) .

Through the observation of these photographs, it becomes possible for individuals to encounter the rehabilitated worker in a context which represents them as a functioning member of society. In this case, the depersonalization and derealization is multiplied on many different layers, through the rehabilitated soldier and the medium in which they are represented. The third layer of this particular instance drives it even further as the work of the factory is conducive to activating feelings of depersonalization and derealization.

Re-education centers were able to help wounded veterans regain their sense of identity as an economic agent who contributed to society. However, we see at the same time that these re-education centers are reproducing the means by which these soldiers were mutilated in the first place. It would be all too perfect if the damage caused by the war were repaired by these efforts of the state. On a surface level, the wounds were mended with prosthetics and the sense of self was restored through training and regaining economic function, but an adjacent problem arises. The type of work that they were trained to do in the factory would undo a lot of this progress made, and this is something that goes deeply unrecognized. The work of the factory carries with it characteristics that create a depersonalizing experience. The factory and the work completed there create an environment where depersonalization and derealization can take hold. For individuals who have suffered such a crucial blow to their sense of self, one has to wonder if they were affected doubly by the environment of the factory. In certain veins of Marxism, it is noted that there is a fragmentation that occurs in factory work. This is striking because an amputation in itself is a type of fragmentation, or a rationalization as Lukács states in *Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat*. Amputation, fragmentation and rationalization all share this quality of taking apart something: to amputate a limb from a body, to take a fragment of an image (such as a photograph), or to ration supplies. Lukács postulates a relationship between

man and machine where man turns into machine, reminiscent of amputees being outfitted with special prosthetics connecting them physically to machines:

Neither objectively nor in his relation to his work does man appear as the authentic master of the process; on the contrary, he is a mechanical part incorporated into a mechanical system. He finds it already pre-existing and self-sufficient, it functions independently of him and he has to conform to its laws whether he likes it or not. As labour is progressively rationalized and mechanized his lack of will is reinforced by the way in which his activity becomes less and less active and more and more *contemplative*.
(Lukács 89)

It appears that the introduction of machinery takes away from the will of the individual by no longer allowing them to be the “master” of their work. The worker is removed from the activity of their work and placed into a contemplative space. Turning to examples of French factory work, we can distinguish elements that lend themselves to a study of depersonalization, which is compounded by the loss of the sense of self from which the amputee is recovering.

In most cases of depersonalization and derealization, there are repeated mentions of the experience of being an automaton or robot-like. These accounts coming from the research of Shogo Tanaka, relate the experience of Malia Bradshaw, a depersonalization and derealization experiencer, who talks about feeling robotic: “I’d look down at my hands and they didn’t feel real. I felt as if I were moving through the motions of life robotically, never quite fully connected like I used to be” (Tanaka 240). Intriguingly, we notice that the act of driving can easily be compared to factory work. The action of driving is something that is easily incorporated into muscle memory. Once a driver has enough experience behind the wheel, for most the act becomes something that is nearly automatic or done with little conscious effort at all. In a similar

vein, factory work, which demands that individuals repeat the same tasks over and over, again can induce similar states that require little thought to control. Mirrored skillfully into the literary, Leslie Kaplan captures this sentiment in the work *L'excès-L'usine* "Pièces morceaux et vie, l'usine, et fer et fer et vie et vie et brique et tuile et entre et sort et vie et vie et clou et clou"(Kaplan). Through the simple repetition of objects, we see the structure of factory work in writing. Upon closer inspection, we notice that some of these object-words are quasi subjective, pointing mostly to the word *vie*. By turning life into an object, we enter into a disassociated annunciation of a particular situation, one that lacks the subjectivity that is so often implied with a word as complicated and meaningful as "life." However, there is an aspect of the dull humdrum of the factory that has the capacity to turn even the word life into something that is empty and objective, a powerful ability.

It would appear that the relentless repetition of actions such as these foster an environment that invites disassociation. It becomes a proverbial "mindless task," leaving behind only the shell, or the body. These metaphors of "shell" and "mindless" can be interpreted as a robotic human, which is mordant given that, in the specific case of mutilated soldiers with prosthetics, we see that they are using artificial mechanical body parts in order to operate larger mechanical machines. In some strange continuum of technology, the human and machine meet. This is further echoed in Linhart's work *L'Etabli* recounts his experience as a factory worker in France, and where we get this short eerie passage describing the ambiance of factory life: "Tout ce qui, en chacun des hommes de la chaîne, hurle silencieusement : 'Je ne suis pas une machine!'" (Linhart 14). These distinct borders between human and automaton may be more transparent than we tend to believe, and especially considering the fragmentation already endured by re-educated workers. It does not take much to infer that this type of work must have

led to similar feelings. Individuals who find themselves in new bodies would be susceptible to these feelings and most likely would describe their factory experience as an individual describes their depersonalization experiences, such as this description, again from Tanaka, “My body didn’t feel like my own. I just felt like a floating mind in space with blunted, blurry thoughts. I found it crazy sometimes that I even had my own body, because I didn’t feel connected to it. I’d look down at my hands and they didn’t feel real. I felt as if I were moving through the motions of life robotically, never quite fully connected like I used to be”(Tanaka 240). Being surrounded by machinations and their rhythm does have an effect on the individual. The routine has qualities of ‘anesthetizing’ and playing with time, “L’informe musique de la chaîne, le glissement des carcasses grises de tôle crue, la routine des gestes : je me sens progressivement enveloppé, anesthésié. Le temps s’arrête” (Linhart 10). There is something borderline tortuous of having to complete the same task continually for long periods of time. It is reminiscent of Sisyphus, although admittedly less extreme. The culling of the mind into a liminal state of restfulness, implied by anesthesia, creates a headspace that is nebulous to the most basic of processes, most likely including processes of determining body integrity.

Photographs and literature do a remarkable job of communicating these deeper possibilities of depersonalization and derealization in the factory for wounded veterans returning to work. The photographs, in particular, are doing more work than satisfying a political agenda for the nation. They are crafting memories of a time period for future generations as well. Photographs are part of the evidence that we have to reconstruct a past and interpret it. Given that there are few alive today that have actual memory of this time period, we come to rely on these pieces of evidence. In this way, these photographs become cognitive extensions of the lived experiences of this time period, so that we may receive some insight and aid when trying to

understand this part of the past. It is through these means that we can extend this conversation of wartime prosthetics to the realm of the cognitive prosthetic, not only in photographs, but also by analyzing artistic trends of the period.

Cognitive Prosthetics

In general cognitive prosthetics are thought of as instruments that aid our cognition, such as a notebook or calculator. De Preester defines cognitive prosthetics as “Technologies that primarily aim at altering our *cognitive* capacities, called cognitive prostheses or cognitive extensions,” as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. A calculator changes our ability to complete arithmetic and a notebook enhances our ability to record information that we have been exposed to, like the faculty of memory does. I will focus on the latter cognitive prosthetic as dealing with memory. Furthermore, the cognitive prosthetic of cultural memory extends beyond the individual. As a basis for this claim, I rely on the work of Alison Landsberg, whose work *Prosthetic Memory* permits a foundation for a social cognitive prosthetic, “This book argues that modernity makes possible and necessary a new form of public cultural memory. This new form of memory, which I call *prosthetic memory*, emerges at the interface between a person and a historical narrative about the past, at an experiential site such as a movie theater or museum” (Landsberg 2). Landsberg’s work on prosthetic memory seems to reinforce these thoughts that certain realities and experiences are prosthetic. Landsberg focuses mainly on how memory can be prosthetic, meaning that one can adopt memories from other groups or time periods. For example, she uses the examples of medieval stained glass which shows the characters of the bibles in the garb of a European peasant. The characters of the bible would have certainly dressed differently, but by depicting them as being akin to medieval peasants the peoples of that

time were able to more readily adopt the cultural narrative into their lives, giving them a prosthetic memory or identification with the characters of the bible. By examining media such as film and experience museums, she shows how the incorporation of certain elements of history can be imparted onto a group of people who did not actually live through the experience. Landsberg's argument hints at the notion that we tend to take on the characteristics of our favorite characters that we observe in film and in interactive experiences, such as those found in museums. The argument is buttressed by the engagement of the senses and the deep emotional connection we form with film. However, the period of the Great War was not as privy to the depth of sensory engagement permitted through film which would be found in the later part of the 20th century. Therefore, it is necessary to alter Landsberg's argument slightly to conform to the time period, by this I mean that we should take paintings and artistic movements into consideration. Mobility prosthetics of the First World War had the goal of re-educating the soldier as a worker in order for them to re-enter the workforce, therefore, the goal of the mobility prosthetic is social in and of itself. Nonetheless, the re-introduction of these workers into the social stratum of economic labor was not something that was easily integrated. There were different movements that dealt with the portrayal of the wounded veterans, each having a different philosophy underlying their treatment of the veterans. These styles of art are what we are left with in order to create a prosthetic memory of the social situations that WWI veterans found themselves in after the war.

From the battlefield, to the hospital, to the rehabilitation center, and to the factory, these were not the only spaces in which the body was being remodeled and rethought. The world of art as well was undergoing changes that were deeply interested in the restructuring of the human

figure. According to Hal Foster, there were at least two styles that dominated artistic scenes during the turn of the century:

Thereafter the period was dominated by two tendencies above all. On the one hand, there were various returns to the figure, some neoclassical in spirit, that can be read in part as reactions against the mutilated bodies of World War I as well as the fragment figures of high-modernist art (cubist above all). On the other hand, there were various mechanical modernisms, most constructivist in spirit, that can be seen in part as attempts to make over this body-ego image damaged in reality and representation alike. (Foster 110)

The constructivist spirit held radical stances in regards to the representations of the human body. Foster focuses on Italian futurist Fillipo Marinetti, whose work I would like to also examine in relation to the rise of prosthetics in wounded war veterans. Two works that appear to be revelatory of Marinetti's stance towards the human body are *Manifeste du Futurisme* and *Dynamic and Synoptic Declamation*. The manifesto was published before the events of the First World War, and the other tract was published contemporaneously in 1916, yet both carry very similar messages that call for the mechanization of the human body. As a matter of fact, Marinetti was a proponent of war: "We will glorify war—the world's only hygiene—militarism, patriotism, the destructive gesture of freedom-bringers, beautiful ideas worth dying for, and scorn for woman" (Apollonio 20). For the futurists, destruction meant creation, so, through the destruction of the human body on the battlefield, we are able to create something new, something stronger, a hybrid between human and machine. This artistic movement seeks the erasure of human qualities that are perceived as weaknesses, this extends to the weakness of our physical bodies, which are warm and soft. Our flesh should be replaced with cold hard steel, which is strong and impervious to attacks. Marinetti fetishizes technology as a supremely masculine

attribute that should be used to create a stronger human. In his manifesto, he blurs lines between man and machine. In particular he seems fascinated by the automobile and makes a combination of automobile and man, as he makes reference to a centaur, however, this centaur-man-car crashes into a ditch. To be more specific, it is the ditch of a factory, and the machine-man hybrid delights in drinking the sludge from the factory drain: “O maternal ditch, almost full of muddy water! Fair factory drain! I gulped down your nourishing sludge; and I remembered the blessed black beast of my Sudanese nurse... When I came up –torn, filthy, and stinking—from under the capsized car, I felt the white-hot iron of joy deliciously pass through my heart!” (Apollonio 20). Marinetti perverts the human function of consumption by ingesting factory waste for nourishment and combines elements of anatomy and technology in order to further drive home the combination of man and machine. The white-hot iron of joy piercing his heart is a type of reverse personification where the non-human is used to describe something that is thought of as human. In this example, we have joy being thought of as a white-hot iron. The combination of man and machine for Marinetti is something that is glorious, it resembles more so an optimistic future for the use of technology. Additionally, it falls in line with the attempts to highlight the wounded veteran as a win for the state. By this I mean that the photographs used to show war amputees at work portrays them in a favorable light. Therefore, the state is seen as benevolent and ingenious for being able to re-integrate workers who are otherwise incapable of performing labor. This movement also has its counterpart in artists who portrayed the war veterans as undignified and miserable. One such artist that comes to mind is Otto Dix, and one particular work of his, “Skat Players” (Figure 3).

The work is made with oil painting and collage, and it depicts three severely wounded war veterans playing a game of cards. One of the soldiers, on the left, has a leg although he

cannot use it to stand on during the card game, since it is the only means by which he can hold the cards. The soldier in the middle has double leg prosthetics. The veteran on the right is only a torso and lacks leg prosthetics altogether. It is difficult to identify the limbs of the two soldiers who have leg prostheses, the one on the left and the one in the center, since they blend in with the iron legs of the table. Their resemblance to table legs puts emphasis on the immobility of the veterans, since their prostheses are so similar to table legs and table legs are, by design, not meant to move. The legless soldier off to the right has one arm and the other is prosthetic, the articulations of the prosthetic joints show through the uniform of the soldier to bring attention to the mechanical nature of the prosthetic. In the middle we see that the soldier has no arms at all, so he holds cards in a detached apparatus as well as in his mouth. Aside from the mobility prosthetics present in the scene, we also get a glimpse into different sensory prosthetics, which we will only discuss here briefly. Depreester defines these prosthetics as “Technologies that primarily aim at altering our *sensory* capacities, called perceptual prostheses or perceptual extensions.” Very clearly in the painting we are dealing with audio and visual prosthetics. The armless soldier on the right has a metal tube that extends from his inner ear down onto the table in order to replace an ear. The middle veteran has an eye that differs in color, shape and size from his left eye; the lack of detail in the pupil and iris indicate to us that the eye on the right is a prosthetic. The only true sensory prosthetic is the hearing device, since it is the only one that actually aids in sensory perception, the replacement eye is an aesthetic choice since in general they do not aid in seeing. Nonetheless, all these prosthetics have a huge impact on the senses of the veterans which is very cleverly hidden in their skin. To be more precise, we see that the color of their skin is a soft pink with touches of deep red which indicates irritation and pain of the epidermis. The wearing of prosthetics is often a painful experience, and one that Dix does not

overlook this choice of coloration in the skin of the veterans. In particular, the veteran on the right, with his gaping eye socket surrounded by fragmented patches of skin of which is entirely colored in this grotesque pink and red indicating deep seated irritation and rawness. Dix communicates a deep sense of pain through his work. Even in the overhead lamp, we see that there is a skull, a symbol of death and pain. Not only is this a portrayal of pain but also one of the failure of the state. As Vlajić writes: “The subtitle of the painting, Four of These Don’t Add up to a Whole Man, makes explicit Dix’s passionate critique of the inhuman uses of technology. At the same time, the pomposity of these wrecked figures and their absurd attempt to keep their military dignity and to keep marching makes them appear as worthless remains of the Prussian army. The war machinery has produced these human wrecks but Dix’s portrait of their grotesque prosthetics shows that the peace machinery was not able to put these men back together” (Vlajić 415).

Instead of depicting these men back to work in the factories, Dix has them only in the company of other wounded soldiers, in tatters, in a dark room, save the skull light, illuminating the room. These veterans are incapable of work and therefore incapable of contributing to society in an important way during an era of heavy industrial demands. Rather, they are playing a game, the game of skat is a skill based three player card game. Skat requires that one individual plays against two others in order to achieve a higher score, at the end of an agreed upon amount of deals all the points are added up and a winner is declared. Like any game, the last one left standing wins, much like in war, the attitude of winning and gambling that is taken up in warfare is therefore transposed onto the artwork. The skull in the light underscores the triviality of their leisure, implying that their play is unproductive and sterile. Death loomed over them on the battlefield and continues to loom over them in their return to citizen life.

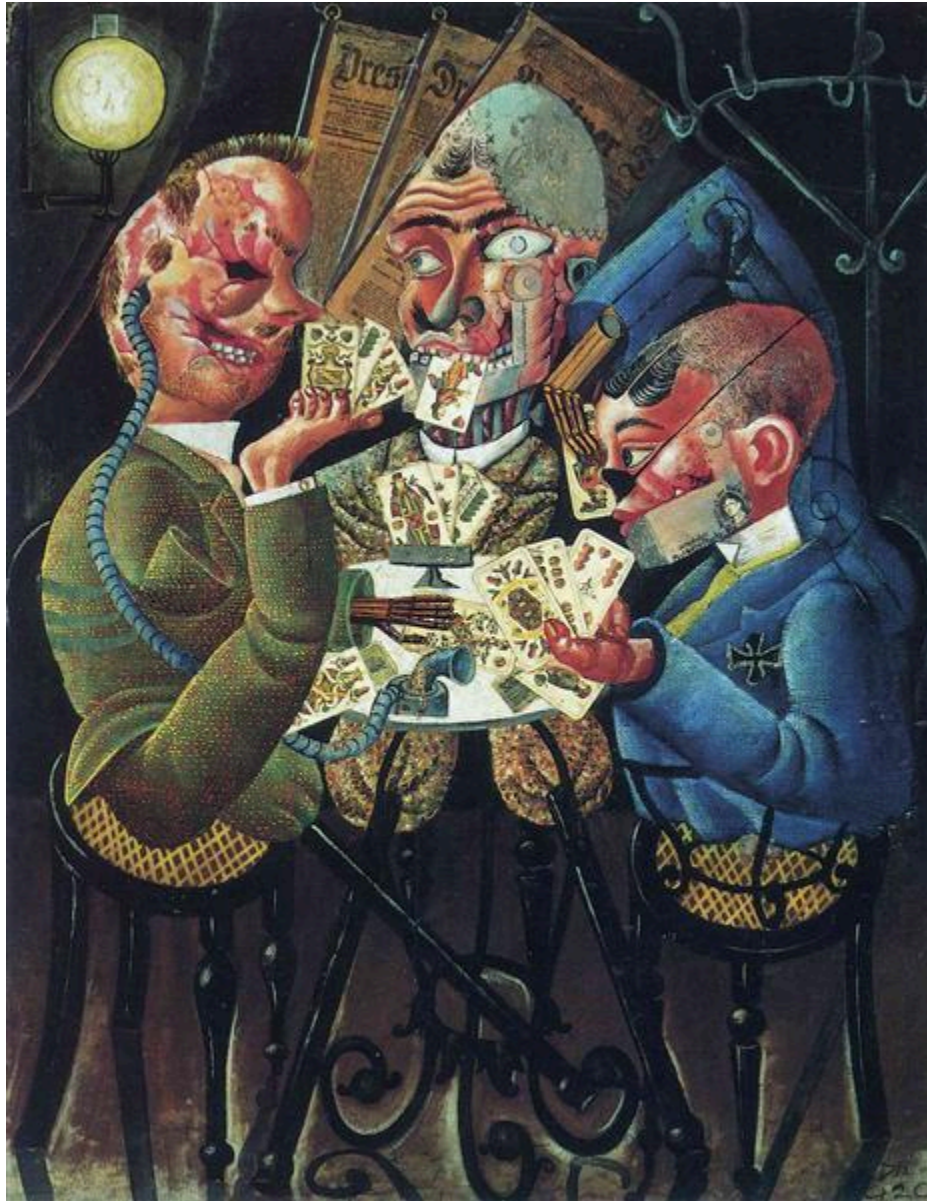


Figure 3: Otto Dix, *The Skat Players* (*Die Skatspieler*), 1920. Oil and collage on canvas, 110 x 87 cm. Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin. © 2026 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

Photography and oil painting-collage are different media that have disparate impacts on how they are received. In the example of injured soldiers returning to work in a positive light, the

medium of photography is adopted. Perhaps this is due to the fact that it is a goal of the state to reassure its population that soldiers are being well taken care of, so this information must be disseminated in a manner that appears to be factual. Photography does a good job at this since it carries with it a realism that is difficult to parallel with other media. Taking a photograph of a re-educated soldier in his work milieu makes it readily adaptable to newspapers and other sources that weave a narrative surrounding the success of the state's treatment of veterans. In general, the worker is in focus while his surroundings are out of focus. This shifts the attention of the viewer on the worker and his actions. The black and white film relies on lighting in order to express warmth and coolness within the photograph, so we notice that the brightest areas are concentrated around the worker which highlights the subject and their prosthetic. On the other hand, the oil-collage painting does not carry with it the authority of the photography in terms of its credibility, but it does a better job of arousing deep emotions that lay below the surface level of a photograph. The work of Dix is an exaggeration that hints at a larger problem: the loss of a generation of men who were irreparably wounded during the war. Instead of highlighting the success of the state, the work of Dix underscores its failure. While in the photograph the mixture of man and machine is a success, we see in Dix that the mixture of man and machine is a failure. These artforms represent two manners of representing the same situation under different lights: one positive and the other negative, of course we should keep in mind the circumstances of each. Otto Dix was on the losing side of World War One, so these wounded veterans would have been seen as a token that reminded the nation of their failure to conquer their neighbors, while the French were in the midst of rebuilding their workforce and nation in the wake of their success. This adds credence to the idea that these medias act as a social cognitive prosthetic as cultural objects that shaped the opinions of the populace of the time period, as well as influencing the

memory of those who did not live through the period. What remains adds itself to an ongoing debate as to whether or not the additions of prosthetics to the body are ultimately a good thing or a bad thing. With advancements in technology it seems that prosthetics will usher us into an era of post-humanism where our weaknesses are overcome and we can transcend passed the limitations of our flesh. On the other hand, we see that prosthetics detract from our humanity and leave us handicapped and haggard. In both instances it is hard not to notice that the notion of reality surrounding the body is torn asunder along with the physical body, and that through technology it is possible to attempt to restore it. A period of disassociation appears to be crucial in this particular process of restoration, and depersonalization and derealization are mechanisms by which the familiar becomes strange, however this strangeness presents itself as a newness. The wounded soldier comes to inhabit a strange new body, unfamiliar to them, and eventually they will become associated with it again, and bear the reality of their body whether it consists of 'real' flesh and blood, or of 'unreal' mechanical parts.

Chapter Four : Broken Faces and Broken Hearts

The Faceless

In French the term *gueules cassées*, the broken mugs in English, designates those who suffered facial disfigurement during the course of the Great War. The employment of a proper noun to refer to this group of injured veterans is not the sole aspect that distinguishes them from their amputee brothers-in-arms. What sets them apart further is the complex web of cultural and philosophical baggage that arises when we shift focus from the body as a whole to the face in particular. I endeavour to demonstrate in this chapter that facial injury is a perplexing type of injury that requires nuance and an interdisciplinary approach to study. To that end I will engage with archives, medicine, literature, philosophy, photography and sculpture. The large swath of material is indicative of the cultural breadth that is necessary to approach the subject of the *gueules cassées* in a comprehensive manner. The significant number of soldiers who suffered facial injuries was a defining characteristic of the First World War, a dimension of the conflict that, in some respects, transcends the war itself.

This investigation centers on the difficulty of acceptance of the injuries by the soldiers and by society as a whole. In particular I examine the intermediary stage between injury and recovery, which I conceptualize as a site of unreality. There are three principle dialectical tensions I turn to that illuminate not only the experience of the disfigured face, but also broader questions about the nature of the face itself.

The first tension I engage with is the unsettling introduction of the gas mask, which conceals the face from enemy and ally alike. Compounded with the war torn terrain, the gas mask was a ‘thing’ that arguably blurred subject-object boundaries. The second involves the use

of prosthetics that evoke the tension between real and unreal. I focus on the importance of artistic works in depicting faces and facial injury, and how prosthetic materials and human tissue become, in some ways, interchangeable. The third tension resolves—and somewhat complicates—the tensions found in masks and prosthetics : plastic surgery. Understanding the plasticity of flesh is a complex task that drives us towards questions that underlie fundamental questions of ontological difference between ‘Being’ and ‘being’. In each one of these instances depersonalization is a key element of the analysis, suggesting that dissociation is an integral part of the intermediary step between injury and recovery.

When considering the face, especially in a philosophical context, Emmanuel Levinas is hard to set aside. I examine how his account of the face aligns, or fails to align, with the tensions explored in this chapter. I find that Levinas’s philosophy does not fully capture the specific dilemmas posed by facial injury. In particular, his framework struggles to accommodate a depersonalized subject who sees their own reflection, and their own body, as Other. In order to address these limitations I turn toward other philosophers, such as Adorno, but more noticeably toward Catherine Malabou and her conception of plasticity. These supplemental philosophies are more responsive and flexible than Levinas’s philosophy in isolation. I aim to demonstrate this through the analysis of two literary pieces *Les hommes sans visage* (Rémi) and *la chambre des officiers* (Dugain) to show how by bringing Malabou and Levinas into dialogue, we have a more robust philosophical account of the profound estrangement and disorientation experienced by the disfigured.

Gas Mask

Given that the moment between injury and recovery is where these depersonalized and derealized tensions arise, we have to start at the point and cause of injury. It should come as no surprise that the most common culprit of facial injury during the war is the *obus* (shell). As much of a shock as the *obus* was on the battlefield in the Great War, there was yet another element that was added to the *obus* that was met with more disdain: asphyxiating gas. Chemical warfare during the Great War was incredibly harrowing; the most common types used were chlorine, phosgene, and mustard gas. Symptoms were varied, but usually they included one or more of the following: severe skin and eye irritation, difficulties breathing, nausea, vomiting, or death. These gasses work quickly to break down organic tissues, such as the skin and lungs, by burning them. Detection of the substances is difficult and nearly impossible for those who are caught unaware and uneducated in the proper procedures of how to survive a chemical attack.

The Germans are usually cited as being the first to successfully engage in modern chemical warfare on 22 April 1915 at Ypres—there is no doubt however that both sides used chemical agents in their attempt to put the seemingly endless war to a finish. Chemical war changed the landscape of the already dreadful battlefield. Consequently, there was a need to mount a defense against these chemical agents; the response to the gasses was the issuing of the gas mask to soldiers on the front. Thus, the gas mask entered into the canon of battle during World War One. Historian Peter Thompson tells us that the reaction to the introduction of gas technologies to the war was met with reluctance and ridicule:

Some saw this new technology as un-masculine or ungentlemanly in relation to the inherited rules of war. Others found gas masks to be particularly comical or alien in form, referring to them as “stinkhoods, mouth drums, pigs’ snouts, muzzles, and carnival veils”.

Certainly, there was something rather dehumanizing and disturbing about the concealment of the face. (Thompson 253)

Nonetheless, the gas mask became a necessary piece of equipment for those in the trenches. It was almost a synecdoche for the war itself: when one sees the gas mask it is hard to avoid thinking of the First World War. In addition, the gas mask entered the wider cultural psyche surrounding the war as a piece of technology that represented the shifting complexity of warfare in an industrialized world that was coming up with more insidious and stealthy ways of killing en masse.

On the individual level, the gas mask also made alterations to the subjectivity of the soldier. Thompson speculates on the development of the “chemical subject,” which is a description of how the gas mask, as an object, was integrated into the subjectivity of the soldier. The gas mask was a constant physical reminder of an invisible death-inducing agent, even despite the fact that the gas mask was the device which protected against this cloaked danger:

In this way the gas mask was not merely a technology derived from necessity, but a *thing* that revealed potential injury or death for the average soldier. Indeed, the gas mask forced a direct and visceral confrontation with the rapidly developing technology on the World War I battlefield. Thus, it served to shape the *chemical* subject, a newly envisioned modern man of the twentieth century. Through personal discipline and a body enhanced by a permanently attached breathing apparatus, a new *chemical* subject comes into being in a future permeated with toxic gas, thus redefining the possibilities for human survival. (Thompson 252; emphasis in original)

As we have seen with prostheses, technology is capable of altering subjectivity in fascinating ways. This new form of technology carried with it a portent of death, thus changing the existential disposition of those equipped with it. In addition, due to its alien appearance imbued in its design, the gas mask also altered other aspects of subjectivity in comparison to prosthetics. The face may not serve a similar motor function to limbs, however it has a large social function. The face is the site of speech and a site of expression that is in a league of its own in comparison to limbs. Covering the face with a gas mask will make alterations to these functions of the face. When such alterations occur, it can be a derealizing and depersonalizing experience: “When the masks were donned, the trenches were no longer filled with friends and foes. They became an outlandish landscape populated by bug-eyed ghosts, incapable of entirely expressing emotion or humanity. This uncanny visual surrealism was compounded by the gas masks that were later developed for dogs and horses” (Thompson 253). By dislocating the subject from a human milieu via concealment of the face—something stronger than concealment of it, perhaps the emergence of a new type of face—the basis for a reality rooted in human intersubjectivity may likewise be compromised. While it remains speculative as to whether the concealment of the visage is enough to provoke symptoms of depersonalization and derealization, it is not implausible, especially in light of descriptions such as “uncanny visual surrealism.” Moving forward it will become evident that there are very deep metaphysical questions in regards to how objects interact with self and Other. Inquiries into these complicated dialectical tensions lead me to the realm of unreality and therefore depersonalized and derealized states.

The gas mask sank the soldiers further into the surreality and incredibility of the war. The normal interaction between two subjects, posited as a self/Other dialectic, is destabilized by the gas mask. By concealing the face—one of the last remnants of humanity present in the hellscape

of the battlefield—a tension is engaged between the self and Other. The tension I speak of is a relationship that is constantly in flux between self and Other. In the example of the gas mask, we see that the self of any given soldier encounters the Other wearing a gas mask and this estranges the self from the Other insofar as the inability to recognize the Other disrupts the fraternal bond between the two. What Thompson is demonstrating by putting forth the *chemical subject* is, in fact, a challenge between self and Other that is compounded by the strangeness of the barren wasteland of the battlefield environs. The terrain of Europe was rendered unrecognizable by trench warfare. All vegetation was eradicated, deep holes were carved out by heavy artillery fire. Often these holes were filled with rain and became treacherous muddy pits, corpses strewn about, rats, insects, carrion appeared in abundance to feed on all the death that impregnated the landscape. And, in the winter months, it was freezing. For all intents and purposes, it was a different world. Intense mutations such as these changed the visual landscape into something foreign and unfamiliar. Along with the introduction of new war apparatus, we see that the soldier was dissociated from their sense of self, sense of Others and the sense of familiarity with the land they were fighting for. These moments where the self feels estranged from the Other call to mind an episode of derealization, an intense moment of unreality that can only be described as “surreal” or “uncanny,” as Thompson puts it. However, this tension is not absolute; we must recognize the complexity of the self/Other dialectic at play. The self, upon feeling estranged from Others, would experience resistance against this foreign feeling and would tear itself away from the strangeness in order to return to a more normative experience of self/Other. This is quite simply accomplished by the acknowledgment that there is in fact a human being under the mask, and that the shells and martial landscaping have altered the environment to render it unfamiliar. Through the testimony and scholarship surrounding these moments, it is clear that there is a

reciprocity between moments of unreality and reality which find their impetus in the self/Other dynamic. The gas mask is a fairly straightforward example of this dialectic in play, and it remains incredibly fluid. By fluid, I mean that the experience of seeing a familiar person in a mask can destabilize the feeling of familiarity toward the person, although when it becomes apparent that underneath the mask there is a familiar person, the tension relaxes. Nonetheless even when the tension relaxes and the realization takes place, there can still be moments where the unfamiliarity is experienced again and an effort is needed to reset the tension. The dichotomy of these experiences in regards to the face become vastly more complicated once we start to consider facial injury. Given that these facial injuries are not a simple mask that can be taken off, there is more resistance in the dialectic.

Losing Face

Gas masks covered the face in an attempt to prevent serious internal bodily injury. As we have seen, it is even hinted that these articles became deeply intertwined with the soldiers' being through the power of the rapport the gas mask had to the propinquity of a painful death. The gas mask represents how the face and head, along with its organs, were points of vulnerability which could be exploited by the enemy in order to inflict serious bodily injury. However, the head and face were also of crucial importance in and of themselves; despite this fact, they were not very well protected. Helmets were designed to stop fatal head shot wounds, yet, insofar as the parts below the hairline were concerned, there was woefully little protection. The face was exposed to the airs of battle and regrettably, it was therefore constantly at risk of obliteration. Facial injuries are some of the most gruesome examples of the barbarity of warfare; not only are they visually disturbing, but they also pose significant social problems for those who sustain them. Injuries to

the face posed a different set of social problems in comparison to the social problems of amputees. The social problems that the facially injured confronted often pointed to an injury of a different order than that of limb amputees, for a severed limb could arouse empathy and denote patriotism, while an injured face was often met with confusion or disgust. Many soldiers would not feel comfortable showing their injured faces in public which had an effect on their ability to secure work and to be an accepted member of the community. Without labor and community, these soldiers were denied key aspects of the human experience. It is quite difficult to articulate what this lack qualifies itself as, seemingly it presents itself as the dissipation or erasure of the energy of an injured veteran. In other words, depression and self-isolation are real risks for those with facial injury. Oftentimes, facial wounds can be categorized by which parts of the face are missing: the lower and upper jaw, the eyes, the nose, ears, etc. With the detachment of these parts, the soldier's humanity was seemingly left in the wake as well, not only their humanity but also their identity was called into question. When part of the body is severely mutilated or lost, a subject may interpret that as a loss of self. In a similar vein, prosthetics, even clothing and other apparel can change how an individual feels about their identity and how others perceive them as well.

As I demonstrated in a previous chapter, even art and media could form cognitive prosthetics which influenced identity and memory. The alteration of identity through the loss of flesh, addition of a prosthetic, or experience of a cognitive prosthetic builds a bridge between depersonalized states and traumatic injury through engendering an inability of the self to identify as self. Given that these instances pose pointed challenges to identity, and we can observe how it becomes more malleable than usual and results in changes to identity, it may be assumed that the

self may become depersonalized and derealized through destruction of the flesh, and not solely through psychological or abstract means.

Prosthetics

Attempts were made to fashion prosthetics that would be capable of restoring some of what was lost to these injuries. Such ventures were not entirely successful, but they nonetheless provided a step in the right direction on the road of recovery for these injured veterans. What comes to be of a great interest here is the question as to how it is that materials are adequate in the replacement of facial tissue and the concealment of severe injury. It attests to the finding that objects can play a role in repairing deeply subjective facets of the individual, this posits a modification of the subject/object dialectic. This modification reveals a shared quality of non-identity between object and subject; this is articulated in the dialectic in the work of German philosopher Theodor Adorno. Adorno's "negative dialectic" revisits the persistent philosophical problem that there is a residue within an object that resists our attempts to totalize it or have a complete understanding of it; we are unable to entirely line up an object with the concept we have of it. In other words, there is a disparity between the presence of an object and the representation of it by the subject. Adorno seeks to demonstrate that this problem misses a key point; it is not so easy to delineate between objects and subjects. Philosopher Vangelis Giannakakis in his book *Negative Dialectics and Event: Non-identity, Culture, and the Historical Adequacy of Consciousness*, clearly summarizes this point:

...if the subject is altered as a result of coming into contact with the object, notably by reason of becoming aware of new facets of the real, so, too, is the object, through a

renewal of the ways in which it resists the subject; what in the object is non-identical to the subject is 'the things own identity against identifications.' (Giannakakis 10)

Returning to the gas mask example, the negative dialectic captures the high strangeness of the encounter with the masked comrade. The gas mask resists the subject in a manner that challenges the normal circumstance in which a face-to-face encounter between humans occurs. There is a moment of tension where something is not picked up by the subject as it becomes 'aware of new facets of the real,' thereby destabilizing the relationship.

While it may be held that the introduction of masks destabilizes subject-object relations, it may also be helpful to closely consider the rapport between absence and presence in regards to this question. Within the negative dialectic, the major concern is identifying the bond that permits a synthesis between object and subject. However, if we take the subject as always already object, then there is a part of the subject that cannot be totalized—just as the object cannot be totalized; this creates a bond between the two. This resistance is amplified through the addition of objective features to the subject via prosthetics or masks making the subject more objective.

We will now take a further look at the reasons why the materiality of the face presents us with deep questions. A striking example were the masks designed by artist Anna Coleman Ladd, who used various copper-plated materials to emulate facial structures. Coleman Ladd was attempting to return the dignity of the face by hiding the tatters left behind by the hand of war: "Ladd's masks were designed to offer their wearers the spiritual and psychological ability to confront their past moment of wounding as a way not only to overcome its present traumatic effects but also to imagine a future in which they could marry, sire children, and rejoin the workforce" (Shaheen 641). As a sculptor, Ladd possessed the skills necessary to fabricate a mask

to cover up these injuries and return a sense of humanity back to the soldiers, giving them their sign of humanity back while masking the traces left over from barbarity underneath. Artists would come to be of central importance to the reparation of the facially wounded. Several artists made relevant contributions to our understanding of the face and its relationship to objects, Other, and unreality.

Artist 1.0

In the context of World War One, we see that art had great utility, especially to those with facial injuries. For example, Raymond Duchamp-Villon, brother of Marcel Duchamp and participant in World War One, produced busts of heads that can be linked to facial injury during the war. Harold Gillies, a surgeon from New Zealand, is often credited with the founding of modern plastic surgery, a discipline that blends the boundaries between art and medicine. In more recent memory, there is also Kader Attia who uses art to make a statement about the continuum of repair between African and European cultures; the broken faces of World War One are indispensable to his message. By exploring these artists we can gain insight into the utility of art during World War One and a glimpse of its emanation into the twenty first century.

A seemingly liminal space is made of the face through artistic representation during this time period. Particularly present in the work of Raymond Duchamp-Villon, we see a transitional representation between mask and visage. Duchamp-Villon was part of the war effort, although as fate would have it, he became incredibly ill during his service, requiring him to come under the medical care of several physicians, “Duchamp-Villon himself became a patient at a succession of military hospitals, and by the end of 1917, suffering from several abscesses and septicemia, he was treated by Dr. Antonin Gosset at Corbineau Hospital in Châlons” (Zilczer 21). One of

Duchamp-Villon's most recognizable pieces inspired by Dr. Gosset who he made a bust of, but he also created such works as *The Head*⁹, which was an abstract rendering of a head, which in the context of his work may be described as: "Another striking abstract visage [that] was inspired by a gas mask" (Zilczer 22). The fusing together of the gas mask and the face was an artistic maneuver which let the material or objective enter into the topic of the face in a non-violent way, meaning it was not the result of an injury. The abstractions of the head that were portrayed by Duchamp-Villon deal with distorting and accentuating 'normal' facial features, again drawing the comparison to masks, "In *The Head*, the facial features of the eyes and nose have been severely reduced to produce a disturbing distortion of the human physiognomy. The snout-like elongation of the nasal area combined with the repetitive application of three coil-like lids over each eye has transformed the head into a mask-like visage" (Zilczer 141). As stated previously, the face was a site of vulnerability during the war, but it was also a site where the distancing of the rapport between self and other could occur. As soon as the gas masks went on, the soldiers knew they were in a situation of high danger and they were also surrounded by outlandish masks covering the faces of their comrades, therefore depersonalizing and derealizing them. Through Duchamp-Villon's representation, we can understand the face as the site where these types of transformations can occur. His body of work and focalization on the head underscore the plasticity of the face and what such alterations imply. While Duchamp crafted altered faces, his countrymen's faces were being altered on the battlefield, and sometimes their repair was an imitation of a facial part with plastic arts; a wooden nose, a glass eye, a metal face plate, etc.

The interchangeability of objects and body parts, as seen in the work of Coleman Ladd and Duchamp-Villon emphasizes the dialectical tension between identity, face and objects.

⁹ *The Head*, specifically mentioned by Zilczer, is from the Philadelphia Museum of Art. It is photographed in the article, but does not appear online on the Museum's website. I would like to note that this art piece is separate from the more popular bust of Professor Gosset's head.

Materials can be worked by an artist, such as in the case of Coleman Ladd, until they come to mimic the superficial appearance of facial structures - restoring a piece of identity to the subject through mimicry. Although a problem is manifestly present, there is a quality of the psychic in our material make up, meaning that the psychological life is housed in a physical body, or at least it appears to be so. This is quality that is not found in wood, glass, or metal, as far as our current understanding goes. So then, we may wonder how objects could restore hope to a facially-wounded soldier at all, and the one answer to this question can be found in Adorno. It is because we are always already objects. This is the crux of the priority of the object argument of Adorno and demonstrates why it is an effective fix for injured soldiers, "Object takes precedence over the subject, not in terms of a naive empiricism, but instead in the sense that subject is *always already* also object..." (Giannakakis 10). According to Giannakakis, this is a truth that troubles our subjective side, so it is covered up and forgotten through a need to 'spiritualize,' "This forgetting stems from something like an anthropological need to keep at a distance what strikes the subject as an adverse material reality, and to acquire mastery over it, through a process of spiritualization"(Giannakakis 10). By peeling the layers back of an epistemological history surrounding a sacralization of the face, we could view it as a spiritless object. Thus, at a glance, the objects that are used to mimic the face succeed in their mission to repair the face, however, upon further scrutiny it may become apparent to an observer that it is only a facade. The addition of objects or prosthetics disturbs the apprehension of self because there is no subjective extended into the prosthetic, it remains an object of non-identical nature to us:

Pure identity is that which the subject posits and thus brings up from outside. Therefore, paradoxically enough, to criticize it immanently means to criticize it from outside as well. The subject must make up for what it has done to non-identity. This is precisely what

liberates it from the semblance of its absolute being-for-itself. That semblance in turn is a product of identifying thought—of the thought which depreciates a thing into a mere sample of its kind or species only to convince us that we have the thing as such, without subjective addition. (Adorno 145-146)

To this point, the prosthetic is the epitome of an element of subjective identity made material; it is a “sample of its kind”, which could be a nose or cheek, attempting to convince the prosthetic user that it is their face—or at least it gives the “semblance” of identity to a face. However, this semblance of identity is not solely an issue of a prosthetic’s material non-identity, it is also a temporal one. In *Negative Dialectics*, Adorno draws a direct parallel to the relationship between self, time, and unreality:

In fact, if an older person looking back has started early on a more or less conscious existence, he will distinctly remember his own distant past. It creates a unity, no matter how unreal the elusive picture of his childhood may seem. Yet the “I” which he remembers in this unreality, the I which he was at one time and potentially becomes again—this I turns simultaneously into another, into a stranger to be detachedly observed. Such ambivalence of identity and nonidentity extends even to logical problems of identity. For those, technical terminology stands ready with the customary formula of “identity in nonidentity”—a formula with which we would first have to contrast the nonidentity in identity. (Adorno 154)

Adorno frames the problem of identity around memory. When we remember our past, our childhood in his example, the “I” we are remembering represents an “unreality,” that we are no longer identical to. The maintenance of a temporally cohesive concept of self requires the capacity to find identity in non-identity. According to Adorno, the sense of self is therefore

predicated on “unreality,” to a certain degree. However, facial prosthetics push this to an extreme, forcing the individual to incorporate objects into their subjective sense of identity while simultaneously having to remember a portrait of themselves that was not constituted by objects. The challenge of integrating the “unreality” that Adorno is alluding to is much more difficult for the depersonalized subject, who views their present self as unreal, as well. Therefore, for the depersonalized subject there is a double disjuncture of unreality; an unreality between the “unreal” past self and the “unreal” present self—simultaneously rendered more complicated by the addition of non-identical objects.

What this puts in perspective is that with facial prosthetics the self/Other tension is not located in a spatially distinct and embodied Other (as in the case of an ally putting on a gas mask). The Other and the self can be more or less the same subject with facial prosthetics—as well with depersonalized subjects. The tension is located in a temporal difference of how the self identified as uninjured and how it comes to terms with another identity as injured. The calling into question of the self as Other is a hallmark example of what depersonalization means, in this case, it involves the conflict of a remembered self and a new unfamiliar self apprehended as Other. The reciprocity of the dialectical tension brings the injured self back to its previous uninjured self, which engenders poignant emotions. There is a remarkable amount of hopelessness and dejectedness among those who suffered facial injuries in the First World War, which is explained by this coming to terms with a new disfigured identity while still wrestling with a former facially normative identity. The stakes were massive; it can be argued that a relatively normal face is a prerequisite for economic employment, social acceptance, and reproductive success; elements that could be understood as spiritually important due to their vital rapport to sustaining life. Artists, such as Coleman Ladd, employed their skills in order to lighten

the burden of the tension couched within the tumultuous oscillations of self/Other located in a singular subject.

Duchamp-Villon's work, on the other hand, shows a tension between the self and Other mediated through objects in a manner more akin to the gas mask example. By manipulating plastic materials, Duchamp-Villon created face-like structures that appealed to the tendency humans have to see faces in inanimate objects, known as pareidolia. The resemblance between Duchamp-Villon's sculptures and the gas mask which come together to form a representation of a 'mask-face' pose interesting questions for the reception of this work by the public. In the case of Coleman Ladd, there was a subject who would eventually wear the prosthetic face mask, so the relevant question of identity lies in the wearer of the mask and its effect on the tension between the wearer seeing their injuries as hidden. However, in the case of works such as *The Head*, there is no subjectivity in play in the artwork; the onus of the tensions with identity falls onto the viewer of the artwork. They are caught up in an experience where they see a face, but also something else - which seems to be the case for the facially injured (perhaps conceived as an absence). While this does not represent a depersonalized moment, it is powerful to ponder the extent to which objects can mimic the face. On a much deeper level, it opens the door to the question of the extent to which objects can mimic the notion of a trace of something 'more' or 'beyond' that is present within the face. An interesting middle ground between Coleman Ladd and Duchamp-Villon might be found in the work of Kader Attia, who used photographs of injured WWI veterans and fetish masks to draw startling comparisons between the two while simultaneously commenting on the issue of repair.

Artist 1.1

Pushing forward into the twenty-first century, we can take note of the work of Kader Attia, who used masks and images of facial injury during the Great War to make statements on what he entitles the “continuum of repair.” Attia’s exhibition is set up in a manner that invites one to question notions of repair through the juxtaposition of different cultural artifacts from different time periods : “In *The Repair*, the busts are presented on a framework of metal shelving alongside masks, scientific illustrations and all manner of scientific and historical textbooks. One of Attia’s dominant techniques here is to juxtapose representations of the face which straddle media, chronological periods and cultural contexts and, in doing so, to destabilize the assumptions underpinning those categories” (Jones 69). The exhibit draws a great deal of attention to the face by placing artistic renditions of faces next to images of facially injured soldiers from the First World War. The examples are striking, for instance, one art piece in particular is depicted as having a seashell for a mouth. Pictured in the New York Times, the textured edges of the shell that outline its opening strongly mirror the image of an injured soldier whose mouth is textured in a similar manner to the shell. Attia underlines the ability to substitute objects for flesh, which was a practical method of returning some dignity to the disfigured, as evidenced by the work of Coleman Ladd. It is also a powerful method to underscore the importance that form plays in conferring economic, social, and reproductive viability onto a subject, akin to the work we see in Duchamp-Villon, who straddles the line between subjectivity and objectivity. Spectators of the exhibit are forced to reconcile an apparent demotion of the ontological status of the face as David Jones puts it, Attia’s work “highlights the incommensurability of face and object: when images of the *gueules cassées* are juxtaposed with repaired fetish objects, our resistance to the ontological demotion of the face is engaged” (Jones 72). The thought provoking metaphysical nuances of Attia’s work shake the ontological

foundation of the face, according to Jones. He accomplishes this task in a way that blends repair and injury to create a continuum between the two. Key to the success of this enterprise is establishing a sort of interchangeability between objects and flesh - to show how form plays a role in the dignity of facial structures. While this is a powerful experience as well as an important point to make, there are other variables that come into play when considering the continuum between injury and repair. For instance, it is not only objects that add to the plasticity of the face - it is also flesh itself. By this I mean that there are techniques that do not rely on foreign objects to mimic or restore facial structure, I am referring to plastic surgery which uses endogenous parts to accomplish the same task.

Artist 1.2

We cannot overlook advancements and efforts that were made not to replace parts of the face, but rather methods employed to reconstruct the face by borrowing from other parts of the body. This method is also known as plastic surgery, and it became the most prominent and successful method of repairing facial injuries, as it used the parts native to the human body in order to fix it. The notion of plasticity implies that something is malleable and, before finding a place in medicine, the term was widely used in art. Catherine Malabou is especially helpful in clarifying the notion of plasticity as a multifaceted notion which carries with it deep underlying currents. Malabou traces the history and use of the word plastic as follows:

The noun “plasticity” is linked etymologically with two older words, the substantive “plastic” and the adjective “plastic.” All three words are derived from the Greek *plassein*, which means “to model” or “to mold”. “Plastic” as an adjective has two meanings. On the one hand, it means, “to be susceptible to changes of form” or “to be malleable.” Clay,

in this sense, would be “plastic.” On the other hand, it means “having the power to bestow form,” as in the expression “plastic surgeon” or “plastic art” understood as “the art of modeling” in the arts of sculpture or ceramics. (Malabou 67)

Malabou also touches on the notion that plastic is a term used to describe explosive material which is generally soft and clay-like. The ability of plastic material to explode refers to its dramatic capacity for change; this aspect of plasticity further underscores a similarity between the surgical technique used to repair the faces, as well as the method by which they were injured in the first place. Thus, plastic does not solely serve a reparative function, it also has a destructive function; it is a catalyst for change and yet also a means to revert back to a form which was previously obliterated. It is through Malabou’s understanding of plasticity that I am able to model the dialectical tension of the self upon the destruction and reconstruction of the face. The work that Malabou does allows metaphysics and materialism to intermingle in a way that is highly suited for a study of facial injury, in her own words, in *Writing on the Dusk of Plasticity* Malabou makes this statement in regards to her repositioning of philosophical doctrines:

In the midst of these mobile confrontations, these extreme, differentially bracketed profiles of philosophy and the other thought, time and times, ‘no’ and ‘no’, destruction and deconstruction, there is the fratricidal hand-to-hand battle of presence and the absenting of presence, the present and its withdrawal. To my mind, the second major advantage of the concept of plasticity—discovered for the first time in the preface to Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit*—derives from the fact that this concept can signify both the achievement of presence and its deflagration, its emergence and explosion. It is therefore able to situate itself perfectly in the in-between of metaphysics and its other,

playing to perfection the part of a concept that is some sort of mediator or smuggler.

(Malabou 8)

Malabou draws heavily from the continental tradition, focusing in particular on the philosophies of Levinas, Derrida, and Heidegger. Malabou recognizes the importance of absence and presence, and the study of ‘presence and the absenting of presence, the present and its withdrawal’ or ‘presence and its deflagration, its emergence and explosion’. Malabou shows that this notion of plasticity can philosophically alleviate tensions between ‘metaphysics and its other’, allowing room for transcendental philosophical considerations and its underlying implications which are often present in Levinas. For Malabou the face and the self would not be static but rather constantly open to change, if not in a constant state of flux, settling down into an identity only to be blown apart and reconstructed again into a similar yet different form, a form that was always a potential configuration. The context of World War One offers a moment where philosophy can leave the armchair and be examined in a very unique way. For instance, we can take the blossoming of plastic surgery and analyze its history and outcomes. The plastic surgeon of the twentieth-century, Harold Gillies, stands out for his success and for the promotion of the discipline.

Harold Gillies was a surgeon from New Zealand and a pioneer of the practice of plastic surgery. He would find success in skin grafting when replacing the facial tissue of injured veterans in WWI at his practice at the Cambridge military hospital at Aldershot. Gillies would use skin from different areas of the body: the leg, the back, the chest, etc. and graft them onto the face and hope that the tissue held. This technique did not rely on the masking up of injuries or the addition of prosthetic pieces, rather it used the plasticity of flesh itself from the patient in order to restore their face to an approximate image of what it was before. There were many

elements that had not been considered when caring for the facially injured. The uptick in these types of injuries forced the medical professionals of the time to become innovative as well as patient. A face cannot be reconstructed in just a few operations and, in addition to that, it was complicated to nourish soldiers who no longer possessed the correct anatomy for consuming food: “Gillies understood that it was crucial to maintain the men’s strength so that they could endure a series of grueling operations. Therefore, at Aldershot, specific attention was given to their diet, which mainly consisted of soups, milk and artificially designed foods” (Fitzharris 75). Furthermore, there was a danger that arose from the period of time that was necessary for a successful recovery; the danger was first and foremost a psychological one. If the patient were to see their face before the reconstructive surgery was finished, it could startle and upset them. For this reason, precautions were taken in order to deprive the patient of their own reflection through a widespread ban on mirrors in facial reconstruction wards across Europe. The change in appearance was so dramatic for the facially injured, it was imperative to ease them into accepting their reflection. However, the timeframe of recovery was sometimes very long. It could take years in some cases for a surgery to be completed and, for a new type of surgery that was closely related to art, it was difficult to know when a patient was “complete,” just as it is difficult for an artist to determine when a painting is complete. However, during the time in between surgeries, it was of great importance that the patient not see themselves, or else they may lose all hope. Gillies recognized this danger and instituted policies to avoid situations where the patients could see their own reflection, as was common practice in most all facial injury wards of the First World War : “When he first began working at the Cambridge Military Hospital, Gillies banned mirrors on his wards. The ban not only protected new arrivals from the shock of seeing their injuries for the first time, but it also protected those in the midst of lengthy reconstructive

surgeries from seeing their faces before the work could be completed” (Fitzharris 116). Gillies would be hailed a hero and as a pioneer of the field of plastic surgery due to his innovative practices in regards to facial reconstruction and the successful policies he implemented to keep the morale high among his patients who were forced to endure so much suffering. The process of reconstruction was well documented and often very impressive as one can see the beginning, middle and end result of a few of Gillies’ patients in the book *The Facemaker* by Lindsey Fitzharris. The book offers an abundance of examples of the problems and solutions that plastic surgery encountered in its formative years. The descriptions are more often than not gut wrenching. Nonetheless, it is manifestly true that the human body can endure extreme injury, the face of these survivors in particular offers an incredible chronology from the destruction of the face and its reconstruction. A reconstructed face often was unable to perfectly emulate the original, but it certainly returned the sense of presence of a face and self back to the veteran, thus underlining the plasticity of the face. The injuries inflicted on the soldiers can be described as a certain absencing and presencing of a face, and this troubled a certain ‘state of becoming’ and made it an experience which caused a crisis for the self. This crisis is managed by attempts to repair (otherwise said : reorganize the plasticity of the face) or cover up the injury, which has effects on the ‘state of becoming’ for a veteran. The physical identity of the self, in regards to a disfigured veteran, is mutated - if this mutation had not come to be then their state of becoming would have aligned with previous experience. Through the textual evidence, I will further establish a non-essential quality of the self. Meaning that the self is not something that has a fixed essence, it is plastic - constantly in mutation due to its constant state of becoming. Additionally, I established that through the utilization of artistic techniques there is a blending between subjectivity and objectivity that lays bare the negative aspect of the fleshy body that is

comparable to objects. I believe that this is the case in the works of Duchamp-Villon, Coleman Ladd, and Attia. In the case of Duchamp we see how pure objectivity can come to mimic the structure of the face. Coleman Ladd shows that a fusion of flesh, metals, and wood can be used to mimic the face in a way that can reduce the disparity between the injured self and the remembered uninjured self. Meanwhile, Attia's blending of object and subject reveal the cultural underpinnings of the continuity between injury and repair. Due to tensions between the self and injury, we see various changes to the state of becoming for the self. These changes alter consciousness. The alteration in the consciousness is in regards to the qualification of reality attached to experience; it is altered to a state of unreality. In this case, unreality refers to an unrealized familiarity with the self and the world (commonly described as oneiric; dreamlike).

Art is a useful tool in teasing out philosophical concepts attached to the face. In the cases of Gillies and Coleman Ladd, we see how art is directly implicated in the restoration of the self to injured soldiers. Especially useful in this context is the plasticity of the flesh and facility of which one can make philosophical analogies to the self through a study of this medical practice. This is to say that plastic surgery is very much a practical skill and science, although it does have deep philosophical and aesthetic concerns embedded within it. It shows us that the identity of the self is susceptible to change when the skin is altered, however it is not fundamentally altered given that the memory of the identity before the surgery lingers. Other interesting considerations, found in artists like Duchamp-Villon and Attia, push us further into the ability of art to touch on the metaphysical considerations that arise on the topic of the face. Nonetheless, art is only one medium that has purchase on these complex topics. The literature of the time period presents us with narrators who navigate this resistance in its intricacies, for instance Marc Dugain's *La chambre des officiers* and Henriette Rémi's *Les hommes sans visage*, in different ways.

Literature Without a Face

The literature of the time period does a good job of capturing the reality of these injuries. There was no great need for literary ingenuity as a means to rouse the senses of the readers. The truth was both bleak and gory enough. Many similarities are shared between medical documentation and the works of fiction in regards to the facial injuries of the period. Marc Dugain's *La Chambre des officiers* is one such work of fiction. It relates many truths of the facially wounded to the reader in a way that captures the subjective elements that the more objective documents leave out for the sake of impartiality. Dugain writes the story of Adrien, a young officer who is injured at the dawn of the war, before he even gets to the trenches:

Une détonation part de tout près. Un sifflement d'un quart de seconde. J'ai le temps de voir une tête qui se détache d'un corps qui plie sur ses genoux, un cheval qui s'effondre. L'autre sous-lieutenant, qui était resté en selle, s'écroule de mon côté, l'épaule arrachée, l'os qui sort comme d'un jambon. Je sens comme une hache qui vient s'enfoncer sous la base de mon nez. Puis on coupe la lumière. (Dugain 29)

As soon as the lights are cut, the grueling climb back to reality for the narrator begins. The speed at which it all happens is captured by the punctuation: the action reads like staccato music notes. The action is sharply saccaded by periods: *Une détonation part de tout près. Un sifflement d'un quart de seconde*. A blur of action where life-changing moments happen in the blink of an eye; it is quite a feat to try and capture these instances with words. However, the sentences lengthen to describe the horror of the demise of his fellow soldiers : *J'ai le temps de voir une tête qui se détache d'un corps qui plie sur ses genoux, un cheval qui s'effondre. L'autre sous-lieutenant, qui était resté en selle, s'écroule de mon côté, l'épaule arrachée, l'os qui sort comme d'un jambon*. It is all but a taste of the brutality that is about to follow in the pages of the work. The suffering is

explored in depth through the infection of wounds and the delirium of serious medical trauma.

As is the case with most of the stories about grave injuries, the narrator will wake up some time later in an unknown place and completely transformed, never fully able to return to normalcy, yet longing for it - living in a state of tension where the self is stretched between its previous identity and its new injured identity. The narrator discovers for himself the transformation of his disfigurement in a dark room, he makes the discovery through a brief moment of self-reflexive exploration with his tongue:

Je suis reveillé quelques heures plus tard par une douleur si forte et si diffuse que je suis incapable d'en localiser l'origine précise. Mes pieds bougent. Les deux. Les mains aussi. Chacun de mes yeux perce la semi-obscurité. Je suis entier. Avec ma langue je fais le tour de ma bouche. En bas, elle vient s'appuyer sur les gencives de la mâchoire inférieure : les dents ont été pulvérisées. Les hauteurs, elles, s'annoncent comme un couloir sans fin; ma langue ne rencontre pas d'obstacle et, lorsqu'elle vient toucher les sinus, je décide d'interrompre cette première visite. C'est tout ce vide qui me fait souffrir. (Dugain 32-33)

The narrator first checks his limbs, and when he notices that he can feel his entire body, he states *je suis entier*. This may come as a surprise, because only a few moments later does he discover his lack of an upper jaw which is like a *couloir sans fin*, a metaphor I will come to evoke again. He is whole in the sense that he is not missing any limbs and will therefore remain mobile, yet it does not seem quite right to claim that he is whole. At this point of the narrative, he may not recognize the weight of his plight. He is perhaps happy to see that he will not be an amputee, although the fate that awaits him is no lesser burden. He does not have the means to inspect himself visually, only through his own body is he capable of making observations of his current state. Even then, these observations are not very sober, as admitted by Adrien himself: "Je reste

de longues heures dans cet état. Je perds progressivement cette étrange lucidité que j'ai connue lors de mes premiers réveils. Je fais un rêve. Toujours le même. Mes yeux sont fixés sur des culs de bouteilles qui scintillent en tournant pendant que je mâche une grosse boule d'argile" (Dugain 34-35). The lucidity of his observations is exchanged for the abstract experience of dreams, and not only a dream, but a recurring dream. The dream is revelatory of his body, since he continually dreams that he is chewing on clay. The dream appears to be prophetic by hinting towards the need for change of his current state. First, he is chewing, which would be impossible since he is missing the upper part of his jaw. His dream is therefore forecasting, making him more whole again, pointing equally toward a wish fulfillment, which is additionally ironic given there is an absence to fill. The object he chews is of great symbolic value. Clay is a plastic material, something that is malleable and can be shaped. In fact, the emergence of the field of plastic surgery will be used to reconstitute the face of Adrien. Therefore, the dream through this interpretation is anticipatory of transformation, in other words, it mirrors his new state of becoming.

Nonetheless, Adrien will not gain a visual of his face for quite some time in the narrative; there are no mirrors in the ward. This is a reflection of the reality of the situation that is accurately relayed in the narrative as we have previously seen at the Cambridge military hospital under the direction of Gillies. In facial reconstruction wards, mirrors were extremely dangerous for the morale of the wounded who sometimes needed several months, even years in some cases, to gain the semblance of a face. In Dugain's work of fiction a worker at the hospital, who is too old to fight but too young not to help, tells Adrien it was his job to remove all the mirrors, "C'est rapport à cette clientèle qu'y m'ont demandé d'ôter tous les miroirs. Vous comprenez, y aurait des mauvaises surprises. Pour les barreaux aux fenêtres, c'est pas moi, y z'y étaient déjà"

(Dugain 43). By relieving the ward of mirrors, the staff prevented the individuals from seeing their own wounds, however there was little to no possibility to stop the wounded from observing each other. Having been injured at the very start of the war, Adrien is one of the first casualties. The room he is in is slowly populated by other injured officers, hence the title of the work, *La Chambre des officiers*. Adrien makes descriptions of the injuries of his comrades, and he quickly surmises why there are no mirrors and why they are hidden away on the top floor: “Je comprends pourquoi notre salle se remplit si lentement, pourquoi nous sommes au dernier étage. Dans cette grande salle sans glaces, chacun d’entre nous devient le miroir des autres” (Dugain 52). The power of the novel comes from the fact that these wounded men are capable of seeing each other and, through witnessing the injuries of others, they come to accept their own mutilation, in their own individual ways. However, the situations in which the discovery of an altered self occurs are interesting in ways that are pertinent to some of what Levinas says about the formation of the self.

The context of the facial injury ward reveals certain dimensions of Levinasian philosophy, namely, it highlights the importance placed on the Other. Similar to how these soldiers are learning about their injuries via the Other, it can be said that the self, in a general sense, is first recognized by the Other, as Jung Lee outlines in his commentary of Levinas:

The “unconditionality” of the self commences not with auto affection of a sovereign ego but *in* being *obsessed* by another, in an unrepresentable *before*. Prior to the “subjective condition” of an ego or I, the self is already for-the-other, emplaced in the accusative case as, accusé, of the “myself” before it can ever declare its nominative “I”. (Lee 260)

Looking back at Adrien's self exploration, we see that this additionally echoes the interpretation of Levinas's work done here by Lee. Adrien explores his facial injury with his tongue, but it is so shocking that he does not accept it as an accurate representation of his self, rather it leads to an elongated confused dream state of altered consciousness which points toward plasticity. Adrien will learn most about himself through the observation of the injuries of Others, and partially learn to accept his own injuries as he accepts theirs. Levinas's philosophy is a direct inquiry into the genesis of the ego and the Other's ability to accuse the self of the Other - even before the self can self-identify - we can nonetheless draw a parallel to Dugain's work. First, before beginning the analysis, it must be stated that it is not the same exact context as intended by Levinas. This unconditionality of the self is in reference to the stage of development where one does not yet possess an "I"—and furthermore is incapable of maintaining an identity. This is in contradistinction with Dugain's narrator who is obviously in a stage of development where the ego is formed, so some liberty will need to be taken in order to understand Adrien as transitioning into a new ego, and thereby in the process of ego generation. This is grounded on the evidence provided that physical injury has the capacity to alter the sense of self and, through this alteration, the self is called into question and, therefore, will undergo a similar process to that of ego generation in early stages of development. We have noted already that the narrator engaged in self exploration of his own wounds with his tongue, and is conscious of his injuries, however this awareness remains incomplete as he does not have access to a visual representation of his face. Given the liberty to explore the characters of Dugain's work as newly formed subjects, we can draw parallels, albeit loosely, to the subject who has yet to form their own ego. As we understand these characters as fundamentally transformed, and with the absence of the

mirror, we must see that their new appearance is put into the accusative “you” before the “I” as an injured subject has time to crystallize itself as a proper nominative subject.

Understanding the importance of the Other in the work of Levinas is a necessary detour we must take in order to understand the depth of this relationship to very primordial foundations. Indeed, we are establishing a link between ego generation and facial injury through the Other here, but Levinas uses the Other as the starting point for philosophy, as he claims that ethics should precede ontology. I will now attempt to establish Other, as used in this analysis, in Levinasian terms. For Levinas, the Other is the direct evidence of the idea of infinity. This idea in its origin is Cartesian; it signifies that human beings are imperfect entities who are finite and yet are capable of having an idea of perfection or infinity. Where Descartes uses the term God as the infinite entity, Levinas will use the relationship to Other as the representation of the idea of infinity (not as infinity itself, just the idea of it, since we are incapable of apprehending infinity as finite beings). The primary difference between Descartes and Levinas in this regard is that for Descartes the relationship of the subject to the infinite is epistemological or psychological and for Levinas it is ethical. As a first step to understand infinity as an ethical rapport we should take a close look at Levinas’s philosophy, it is key that we understand that, in order to have an idea of infinity, we must be separate from it: “Nos analyses sont dirigées par une structure formelle : l’idée de l’Infini en nous. Pour avoir l’idée de l’Infini, il faut exister comme séparé” (Levinas 78). We exist as separate from infinity and trend towards it through transcendence. This occurs as our senses seemingly project outwards into the world and individuate objects and totalize them into definite finite objects with meanings. However, there are direct and obvious challenges to our transcendence - namely the Other; “Ce n’est pas insuffisance du Moi qui empêche la totalisation, mais l’Infini d’Autrui” (Levinas 78). Transcendence and infinity exist in the Other given that one

cannot fully assimilate the experience of the Other into self. Therefore, the Other cannot be totalized. If they cannot be totalized, then they represent the untotalizable, which can be reported as the idea of infinity, or that which exceeds our capacity as a finite subject. This idea of the untotalizable is remarkably similar to Adorno's idea of the negative dialectic. Let's remember that in the negative dialectic objects are given priority and possess a part in and of themselves that cannot be taken up by the subject. Additionally we should recall that Adorno states that the subject is always also an object, a being of flesh of blood. This is similar in regards to how we are put in the accusative (without agency like an object) before we put ourselves in the normative (with agency like a subject). This language in Adorno is arguable more developed than in Levinas in relation to that which cannot be taken up by the subject. To tie up the argument we must look at what this does to the subject: it puts them in a relationship to Others and objects. Levinas conceives of the world as being a relationship among things or subjects; language is a system where words have meaning only in relation to other words, and so it follows for beings. This is to say that they only have meaning in relationship to other beings: "Dans la métaphysique un être est en rapport avec ce qu'il ne saurait absorber, avec ce qu'il ne saurait au sens étymologique de ce terme, comprendre." (Levinas 78). *Comprendre* here most likely means ability to contain within self. Therefore, this metaphysical relationship to the negative of Otherness, that which cannot be totalized, serves as the primordial foundation. The example of this relationship *par excellence* is the face. This concept is nearly ubiquitous in Levinas's work and highly characteristic of it. An example can be found in most sections of *Totalité et Infini*, for instance:

Et si j'énonce, comme dans une vision dernière et absolue, la séparation et la transcendance dont il est question dans cet ouvrage même, ces relations que je prétends la

trame de l'être lui-même, se nouent déjà au sein de mon discours présent tenu à mes interlocuteurs : immanquablement l'Autre me fait face - hostile, ami, maître, mon élève - a travers mon idée de l'Infini." (Levinas 79).

Ego generation for Levinas is dependent on the Other. We understand the Other through our relationship to the idea of infinity. It is a relationship because in order to have the concept of infinity we must be separated from it, and therefore we exist in a system where we are in play with it. This separation is grounds to consider the self as imperfect, or not complete. Due to the incompleteness we have needs, for if we were perfect we would want or need for nothing. Our need drives us toward a state of completion, we seek to be full in many respects : in a physical sense we seek out food to become full, we seek out shelter to rest, and in a more metaphysical sense we seek out knowledge to fill our mind. As separate and incomplete beings we run into one major problem, the Other, Levinas describes the Other in western philosophy as an *insurmontable allergie*, which lays bare the inability to absorb or contain what it means to be Other, in turn giving us the idea of infinity. The idea of infinity is used to communicate the unbridgeable gap between what it means to be myself and never be able to be Other. Levinas's thought turns this into an instance of the face. The Other faces me and reveals to me an inadequacy of my own being, this inadequacy is only reinforced through ego formation; "I" am not the one to announce myself to the world, rather "I" is put into the accusative "you" during the formative period of a being.

Linking it back to the facially injured in Dugain's work, we note that the ego formation argument I am putting forth relies heavily on the Other as both object and subject. However, it is important to understand the metaphysical importance of the Other in the framework of the philosophy, and of course the importance of the face, to fully grasp a Levinasian interpretation of

the work. The facial injury resets the ego formation in an intricate and nuanced way, first and foremost it deals with the self's rapport to the Other and how the two are put into relation. The injury of the face impacts the rapport and creates a sort of information gap for the self that is not normally housed within Levinas's philosophy. The information gap between self appearance and the Other is confronted in the novel in at least two ways: Adrien sees an old friend and makes judgments about his own appearance based on the reactions of his friend and, in the other case, we see the reaction of Adrien to his fellow injured comrades.

In the first case, we see that Adrien's friend, who comes to visit, does not recognize him and cannot identify him among the small population of facially injured soldiers in the ward: "Il me voit le premier, détourne son regard pour s'approcher des autres blessés dont il scrute le visage, s'immobilise, se retourne à nouveau vers moi. Alors que je lis l'horreur dans son regard et que je le crois près de repartir en espérant s'être trompé de salle, je lui fais un petit signe de la main. J'écris en grosses lettres 'C'est moi mon vieux'" (Dugain 50). Adrien comes to learn about his condition not only through physical auto-exploration, but also through the horror he reads on the face of his old friend. Additionally, we note that he has to write down "C'est moi mon vieux," since due to his injuries he is not capable of articulating speech. This draws a parallel to the state anterior to ego formation where one does not possess the capacity for oral language. In the second case, we see that a large part of the text consists of descriptions of the other soldiers: their injuries and their plights. This flips the script insofar as it is now Adrien who becomes the Other from which his comrades will learn of their own situation. Adrien makes accounts of the injuries of the soldiers in the ward who will eventually become his friends. His aviator friend Weil, for instance, is first described by Adrien as he passes by his bedside, "Sa peau mate et ses cheveux noirs contrastent avec la blancheur de son oreiller. Son profil est plat. Le projectile lui a

soufflé le nez, lui laissant les sinus béants. L'absence de lèvre supérieure lui donne un rictus inquisiteur" (Dugain 52). Weil's nose will be replaced, and he is insistent that his nose resembles the one that he had before, referencing his identification with his nose. Weil, in his own words, desires to have a "Jewish" nose so that his mother will recognize him. However, this does not line up with the type of prosthetic that is provided for him:

Weil devra se contenter d'un nez de carton, un demi-bec d'oiseau, qui servira de modèle à toute une gamme de nez en plastique, jusqu'à ce qu'on lui fixe une prothèse définitive, un nez sorti d'une poupée d'enfant, d'une matière plus proche par sa couleur et sa souplesse de la peau humaine, mais dont l'aspect lisse tranchera sur ce visage définitivement tuméfié dont chaque morceau a sa teinte propre, entre sang et charbon. (Dugain 73).

Through these scenes of revealing how identity is cached in the material flesh, we see that these characters will have to step into new identities, making compromises with the materials available that were used to reconstruct their faces. They establish kinship that allows them to get through these hurdles together and come to accept their new identities through their formation of a reconstructed ego based on the evidence provided by the Other.

The troop of characters in *La chambre des officiers* band together and encourage each other and, through their unity, they gain the courage to step out into the world, even though it is an intensely uncomfortable experience for them. They still are relatively uncertain of the nature of their own injuries, but they are aware that people are staring at them and their disfigurement. The world becomes their mirror as well, one that judges harshly. However, there is an instance where Adrien catches a glimpse of his visage. After having trouble sleeping, Adrien wraps himself up in a blanket and decides to walk out into the hallway just outside the room, where he

is caught in a moment of self-reflection that reveals his dissociation: Adrien catches a glimpse of his face in the window:

Je marche dans le couloir en direction des lumières de la rue. Là, à la fenêtre, je trouve naturellement un angle où la vitre, fusionnant l'obscurité profonde de l'hôpital et la lumière des becs de gaz, dessine une image qu'elle me renvoie. Je suis dans ce qu'on appelle une "phase de séchage", je n'ai pas le moindre bandage et je découvre ainsi l'image d'un homme avec au milieu du visage un tunnel aux contours loqueteux. Ce reflet irréel et pourtant vrai ne m'affecte pas; je m'étonne de ne pas avoir envie de pleurer ni de ressentir la moindre angoisse, et je suis d'autant plus surpris quand mon estomac, consciencieusement, se met à vomir sur la couverture empruntée. (Dugain 60)

This scene is one of the most indicative of the pain that the *gueules cassées* endured: the moment of seeing one's own reflection and reconciling the self with a new identity. The scene is also highly relatable to the symptoms of depersonalization. In an initial sense the word, *irréel* indicates that depersonalization and derealization may be present. This highlights the common aspect of depersonalization where the unreal is acknowledged but known to be unreal; it demonstrates how his perceived reality is at odds with what he holds to be the truth. The curious aspect of this scene is that it links depersonalization/derealization directly into the self/other dialectic in a manner that is quite uncommon. When a subject loses the sense of itself, it comes to observe itself as Other. As I have previously unpacked how this term can imply infinity through inadequacy of the subject, we see that the experience of infinity is achievable through the self under these very particular circumstances. This experience is not a counterpoint to Levinas's philosophy, rather it appears that Levinas anticipated this possibility under the guise of his neologism *illeity*, which according to philosopher Michael Morgan "is the general expression

for the condition of being in the third person; it is a dimension of third-person-ness within the second person. And what this means, as will be shown shortly, is that it is a dimension of objectivity and generality that is present somehow within the uniqueness and singularity of the second person.” (Morgan 330). In *La Chambre des Officiers* The narrator says that he discovers the image of a man; he denies agreement between his own personal identity and the reflection he is witnessing, effectively seeing himself as Other. Interestingly, this language also implies a third-person point of view coming from the first person. The narrator seeing what is in general referred to as “I” as “he” is a major shift in perception. This lines up with the perceptual shift that occurs in depersonalization as the discussion switches from seeing the “I” in a more impersonal manner. In other words, Adrien sees his self as negative or in the third person, the idea of infinity couched within a reflection of self - a quite abnormal experience. The dialectical nature of the experience flips this critique on its head, given that the narrator is aware that it is himself that he is seeing, so this experience of infinity through self would be fleeting as the tension snaps him back to this realization. If this were not the case, then it would be a full fledged challenge to Levinas’s philosophical discourse, given that it would hint at the ability of a self to know what it means to be other-than-self. The dialectical tension holds this in check and is a sobering reminder of the imperfection of a subjectivity separated from a whole. Another angle to look at is that with depersonalization/derealization, the subject does not view their body as an authentically Other, rather they think of themselves as machines or as an unreal being, other, not-self, a negation of sorts.

Both Sartre and Levinas conceive of the other as a negation of some sort. The presence of Other calls freedom into question, since there is an impossibility of self-identity in the Other. The

Other is : a hole or an absence of self - a challenge to the dominion of the ego. Arnaud Clément, articulates this problematic as follows:

Si, en effet, les autres hommes m'apparaissent d'un côté comme des objets dont l'existence n'est que probable, d'un autre côté ils s'imposent à moi comme étant précisément des hommes, et non des objets. Ils sont autant de points de vue sur le monde, irréductibles au mien, et qui forment autant de sources à partir desquelles le monde se déploie. Autrui n'est pas un objet présent dans le monde, mais un sujet à qui le monde se révèle et qui, comme tel, se situe hors du monde tel qu'il se déploie pour moi. Présent comme objet, autrui est absent comme sujet (Clement 86)

Therefore, to see the self as Other is, in some respects, to see the self as a hole, yet again to make a reference to Adorno, to see self as a negative, or that which appears to be an object, appearing as other and therefore void of selfsame. What is important in this case for our narrator is that it reveals the objective and fleshy notion of the self. The self that sees self as other also sees the self more so in the light of being an object, as subjectivity is dialed back and the difficulty in self-identification rises, then the objectiveness of the flesh (which is constitutive of the problem of Other) is more prominent. The combination of the peripheral experience of infinity through self and the revelation of the fleshy objectiveness of the self work together to create an extreme state of dissociation within Adrien, and nauseate him to the point of vomiting. This quality of dreamlikeness which is indicative of high trauma and stress resulting in instances of depersonalization and derealization. The most novel contribution I could make to the study of war injuries in World War One, is that this state of being, where a subject feels unreal, poses interesting challenges to the philosophical underpinnings of facial injury.

When Adrien sees his face, his reaction seems to defy his expectations. He is surprised that there is no emotional explosion, rather he remains mentally detached, and it is the body that responds physically in an eruptive manner. To put this in terms of the dialectic we see that as Adrien catches a glimpse of his reflection in the window, we are confronted with a passage that masterfully illustrates the tensions at work in his identity. Not only does this narration provide us insight into the tensions of his identity, it also highlights the aspects of depersonalization that may accompany such dramatic shifts in physical appearance. Adrien is undergoing plastic surgery, so his repair will be more permanent than a facial prosthetic mask. However, at the moment where he sees himself, the surgery is not complete and therefore he glimpses an incomplete version of himself. The inability for him to identify himself is echoed by the fact that he is existing in a liminal state where he is shifting from injured to repaired - meaning that his body is in a malleable state just as much as his sense of identity is. This is a prime representation of the dialectic at work - where the self is non-essential. We see that Adrien does not recognize himself once he sees his own reflection and his dissociation reaches a new height. Up until he catches a glimpse of his face in the window, his identity appears to be solid - at least more solid than directly after the injury. He understands who he is and the narration does not question his identity as Adrien very much at all. However, at this moment where he does not recognize himself, we see how this notion of identity can be troubled by the senses, it shows the plastic nature of the self where he is able to articulate and narrate his experience of seeing himself as a stranger. Therefore, it is a vivid representation of the dialectical tension between self and other with the impetus of the disruption being triggered by his own reflection. The self becomes extremely plastic in this scenario; it is malleable and no longer corresponds perfectly to Adrien's concept of self. Additionally, his face is in the exact same situation where it is becoming a new

face that is meant to represent his old identity, however, it is incomplete and in the midst of becoming.

As attested by this scene, the removal of the mirrors only delays the inevitable moment of the injured seeing themselves. It is nearly impossible to hide one's reflection from oneself. Oddly enough, at the armistice, the treaty was signed in the Hall of Mirrors. To make it even more ironic, a delegation of five *gueules cassées* was sent to the signing in order to make a statement on the barbarity of the conflict. Their reflections were hidden from them for so long, only to be exploited as an image multiplied through mirrors at a politically climactic point, in order to become a spectacle. It is understandable how these disfigurements lend themselves to spectacle.

Images Against War

Descriptions of the wounds are enough to make stomachs turn, but images of the injuries themselves capture what the words cannot and undeniably add a dimension to the understanding of what these injuries mean. Here are some examples from *War Against War!* (figure x, figure y): These sensitive images capture more than the literary descriptions of these injuries in very distinct ways. First, the contrast of the images stands out. The black and white photography medium highlights the presences and absences of the face which counters our normal expectations when viewing a face. The negative space of the images contrasted against the soldier's white skin is pervasive in areas where we generally do not expect to see negative space. Figure Y is a side profile image that makes use of the negative space and contrasting background to draw attention to the vast transformation of the soldier's facial disfigurement. As a silhouette, the image hardly conjures the image of a face, rather it appears to be a crescent moon. On the other hand, in figure X, the visage of the soldier is facing us, and his injury is the focal point of

the piece, drawing our attention to the flesh in all of its viscosity. This image draws us into the negative space as well, but not in the same manner as figure Y, where the contrast between white and black is so stark. Rather, in figure X, we see that the image is not as deep of a black as figure Y; it is marred by grotesque chunks of flesh that evoke a certain type of violence akin to attacks of wild animals. Furthermore, the parts of the image that do have the deep contrasting darkness against the whiteness of the pillow and the soldiers skin, seem to draw us into an endless pit, reminiscent of the *couloir sans fin*. Galinat likens the comparisons of Adrien's wounds in *La Chambre des officiers* to an endless tunnel as the interminable religious idea of eternity: "Cela laisse entrevoir une métaphore de la mort assortie à l'idée de voyage sans retour avec l'évocation du tunnel. Celui-ci n'a pas de fin tout comme l'idée d'éternité associée en religion à la mort. La scène a quelque chose de terrifiant et d'irréel : le personnage est tellement choqué par ce qui lui est donné de voir qu'il a l'impression que ce visage n'est pas le sien." (Galinat 153).

Philosophically, darkness seems to denote something unsettling. Levinas in *Totalité et Infini* puts forth an argument to show why darkness can carry with it a sense of, for a lack of better word, dread. He evokes the Platonic argument that we do not actually see light, but rather we see objects bathed in light: "L'œil ne voit pas la lumière mais l'objet dans la lumière. La vision est donc un rapport avec 'quelque chose' qui s'établit au sein d'un rapport avec ce qui n'est pas un 'quelque chose.'" (Levinas 206). The nature of black and white photography therefore leaves us with something that 'is not,'. Levinas will also use the notion of absence to trace the concept of *il y a* - which is, among other things, a spaceless and timeless experience that is housed in observations of dark gaping absences such as we see in facial injuries. There is something tenable in Galinat's argument that the negative space in the photographs of facially injured soldiers implies some sort of eternity. My argument resonates with Galinat's claim that the

religious idea of eternity is identifiable in the negative space, mainly by making reference to the voyage from which there is no return. This makes two points that line up with my interpretation: the stark black of the photo implies a perceived indefinite endless darkness in a facial hole, which mirrors the inability of the soldier to return to the past as an uninjured subject which makes a stranger of the self. I do, however believe that the argument can be reinforced by Levinas's concerns surrounding the sensibilities and the face.

In *Totalité et Infini* we have already seen an argument about vision and light. The analysis of Galinat turns us toward the eternal, the darkness understood as unknown from which there is no return; however, there is more to unpack here. Namely the relationship between darkness, light and vision must be further analyzed to understand how darkness, in and of itself, can arouse unsettling affects in a subject even outside of medically traumatic images. The notion of *il y a* partially hints at instances of depersonalization and derealization through its impersonality, : “La négation de toute chose qualifiable laisse ressurgir l’impersonnel *il y a* qui, derrière toute négation, retourne intact et indifférent au degré de la négation. Le silence des espaces infinis est effrayant. L’envahissement de cet *il y a* ne correspond à aucune représentation; nous en avons décrit ailleurs le vertige” (Levinas 207). Under this pretext, the [negative space presents itself as an impersonal space that the self is not able to invest itself into, permitting a situation in which the self encounters a serious challenge, where being has nothing to absorb or project onto. These sentiments of depersonalization and derealization bring up a multiplicity of difficulties with identity, which sadly are sometimes fatal. The fatal nature of this can be linked in part to the dissonance between soldiers and their injuries, as well as how the public interacts with those who have sustained such injuries, which brings me to the second quality of how these images are distinct from their literary representations. The images bring the grotesque nature of the injuries

to the forefront. This is important because it highlights how truly difficult it is to eschew the feelings of discomfort and disgust that may be experienced by the viewer. There are scant examples of narrators, doctors, civilians, and other parties in regards to the experience of seeing a facially-injured individual. It is a bit of a cultural faux pas to speak candidly about these emotions in regards to the visuals of facially-injured soldiers, although the face has long been subject to emotional responses; “It’s not surprising that disfigured soldiers were viewed differently from their comrades who sustained other types of injuries. For centuries, a marked face was interpreted as an outward sign of moral or intellectual degeneracy. People often associated facial irregularities with the devastating effects of disease, such as leprosy or syphilis, or with corporal punishment, wickedness, and sin” (Fitzharris 12). Understandably, these wounded soldiers made a great sacrifice, and anyone who sees these injuries wants to express compassion and acceptance toward them. One piece of evidence that demonstrates the contrary to this is a reporter from the Daily Mail who visited Harold Gillies facial injury ward and described it in an article: “Nowhere does the sheer horror and savagery of modern warfare appeal so vividly to the mind and senses as in a tour of these wards,” he told his readers. The journalist, who described the hospital as “somewhere in England,” keenly observed that “a shattered arm excites our pity, an absent leg our compassion, but a face ravaged by shrapnel...cannot fail to arouse a certain amount of repulsion” (Fitzharris 86). It is clear that these remarks are insensitive and are not representative of the entire conversation surrounding facial injury. However, it is also a disservice to censor speech and representation of the less-than-desirable feelings that are aroused by viewing their injuries. Sometimes the results of the inability to address these feelings of disgust on the part of the viewing public, and the injured soldier himself, ends in catastrophe.

A poignant example of this can be found in the account of Henriette Rémi in *Les hommes sans visage*.

Faceless Men

The work of Rémi is an autobiographical account of the author's time spent as a nurse during the First World War. Henriette Rémi is a pseudonym; it is clear that the frankness with which the narrator describes her disgust and reaction to seeing the injuries merits a bit of discretion. The opening line of the forward clarifies the stakes of the novel very clearly "Un ami, à qui j'avais remis mon manuscrit, me le rendit en disant : sa lecture m'a bouleversé. Mais quelle idée avez-vous de donner ça au public ? Quel est votre but ? Et d'autre part ne craignez-vous pas que votre petit volume ne tombe entre les mains d'un de vos "blessés de la face" et n'augmente encore ses souffrances ?" (Rémi 11). The uniqueness of this work is found in the candor with which it describes the negative feelings associated with the viewing of severe facial injuries. The vast majority of documents and literature defer to damning the enemy or quickly summarizing the plight of the injured, either showing deep empathy or objectively and coldly describing the wounds with no emotional resonance. In other words, they often obfuscate the feelings of disgust and horror that may arise in the viewer: Rémi does no such thing. The forward has the goal of stating that the view held by the author's friend is the wrong one to hold: if one of the injured read the volume, then they would not be offended. Is it not worse to keep them ignorant of how their injuries are viewed? Are they not capable on their own of understanding that their disfigurement may offend the sensibilities of those who were not prepared to see it? It would seem that, yes, indeed they know, and hiding them from this fact does not do them any good. Rémi's novel allows us to explore the genuine reaction of a nurse who worked with the facially

disfigured everyday, in a way that other texts do not. It also offers insight into how these soldiers reconciled their injuries with themselves, and how there were varying reactions between family and spouses in regards to the injury of their loved one. As we shall see, this novel highlights the particular risk that is taken up by trying to hide the extent of the injuries from the patient. Additionally, it highlights how dissociation ran rampant not only in the injured but also in the families of the injured.

In *Les hommes sans visages* we follow the journey of a young woman named Henriette, who is enjoying a beautiful spring day. While the atmosphere appears serene, it is contrasted by the darkness of the war which creeps into the narrative through a conversation Henriette has with her friend, Marguerite, on the whereabouts of her brother George, who died in the war. As song birds fly above their heads, they discuss the death of George and the effect it has had on her family: “Quant à papa, c’est presque pire encore. Il ne dit pas un mot. Il va à ses affaires comme d’habitude, il se meut comme un automate...” (Rémi 15). This passage highlights furthermore that the dissociative inducing properties of the war extended beyond the battlefield, as Marguerite’s father has become an automaton, dissociated from his personality, which we can only assume was of a more lively disposition. This brief conversation between Henriette and her friend foreshadows the multiple relationships she develops with injured veterans while she serves as a nurse at a facial injury ward. Initially, the injuries are very shocking to Henriette, but over time she habituates herself to them. The rehabilitation process was difficult for her patients, yet the hardest part was often when the injured soldiers were reunited with their family during scheduled visitations. I highlight two particular family visits that each end differently; the first instance is a powerful example of acceptance and the other shows the danger that injured veterans faced when they were denied reintegration into their family units.

The first visitation with family members was often the most tumultuous visit for the injured. In general, it can go one of two ways: the family is accepting or they are shocked and unsure of how to proceed. One striking instance of acceptance is between a father and son. Louis Martin, who was blinded and had a mangled hand, no longer capable of doing farmwork, he states, “C’est que je ne pourrai plus jamais conduire un cheval, je ne pourrai plus faucher, plus gouverner le bétail...” (Rémi 42). He awaits the arrival of his father, and Henriette waits with him in his torment, as he has no way of anticipating his father’s reaction. Upon his entrance into the room, his father puts his hand on his son's shoulder to let his son know he will not forsake him. Louis becomes cold and covered in sweat, he exclaims “Papa, papa ... Je voudrais pleurer ... et je ne peux plus !” (Rémi 43). His eyes can no longer hold tears, and in witness to this emotionally dense scene, a coworker of Henriette summarizes the tragedy “Mais c’est atroce, c’est atroce... Pauvre Martin ! Il ne lui reste plus même ses larmes pour pleurer!” (Rémi 43). Louis Martin would be released and sent home back to his family, and we can only hope he was able to live out the rest of his days in peace. This represents the best case scenario for those who were dramatically injured during World War One. Another one of the patients Henriette cared for, Lazé, represents that which can go horribly wrong after surviving severe disfigurement.

There is a sharp comparison between Lazé’s disposition before and after his reunion with his family. He is described as an exceptionally gay character who is in high spirits despite his injury, a fact that he comes to reflect upon “Ah ! J’étais si heureux!” (Rémi 83). Lazé was blinded, so he had no means of seeing his reflection. However, Henriette acts as his mirror and transmits the image of Lazé to the reader. The passage is marked by a serious imbalance due to the fact that Lazé’s condition has mostly been hidden to him for two reasons: he is blind and no one has the heart to describe his injuries to him. It is not only that the description of his injuries

would hurt him, but also it could influence his mood negatively and therefore hinder a fruitful recuperation. Lazé iterates his excitement to once again see his wife and son:

Ma femme et mon petit garçon vont venir me voir aujourd'hui. Je ne peux presque plus attendre... Vous verrez comme il est beau, mon gamin ! Il a un peu plus de trois ans. Comme il doit avoir grandi ! - Avec un peu d'amertume dans la voix : Si seulement je pouvais le voir (Lazé est aveugle.) Tans pis, je pourrai le tenir dans mes bras - il fait le geste symbolique - je pourrai le serrer contre moi, comme ça, l'embrasser... - Ce mot le remue. - Non, il vaudra mieux que je ne l'embrasse pas. Ma bouche n'est plus faite pour cela. Qu'en pensez-vous, sœur Henriette ? (Rémi 71)

This interrogation "Ma bouche n'est plus faite pour cela. Qu'en pensez-vous, soeur Henriette ?" is met with silence. However, as a reader we are privy to the thoughts of the narrator Henriette, she reveals "Je fais comme si je n'avais pas entendu. Sa bouche ! Cette déformation immense, violette, gonflée par places, ne fermant pas à d'autres, laissant voir une mâchoire sans dents, non, cette bouche - si on veut encore lui donner ce nom - cette bouche-là ne peut plus embrasser" (Rémi 71). It is undeniable that Lazé is somewhat aware of his condition, even though he is blind. He takes his appearance into account, as well as the potential reaction of his wife and child, as he postulates the possibility of kissing them, however he seeks a second opinion which is denied to him. In another instance, Lazé demonstrates to the reader that he is conscious of his altered appearance, as he warns an unknown child about the falsity and dangers of war on a train ride home to be reunited with his family, "Regarde-moi bien, mon petiot, regarde-moi bien. Et ne m'oublie jamais. Ça, c'est la guerre - la guerre, c'est ça, et rien que ça ! Et tout ce qu'on te dira d'autre pour te faire marcher : mensonge, tromperie. Souviens-t'en toujours, toujours !" (Rémi

77). Despite this, the tragic unfolding of his visit to his home only supports the notion that he was not aware of the extent to which he was injured. For others in a similar situation, a mirror, in a way, would have provided a second opinion in a manner that a health professional would not feel inclined to do, since it could have severe psychological repercussions. On top of Henriette not informing Lazé of his appearance, the possibility of seeing his reflection is duly negated through his blindness and the policy to remove the mirrors from the ward. However, this is only wishful thinking and hindsight bias. If these customs and practices were in place to prevent individuals from capturing their appearance, then it was because the majority of patients benefited from this.

There were a few moments that indicated that Lazé would not fare well if his wife and child did not accept his injuries. One sign comes from the fact that Lazé makes several statements about how joyful his son, Gérard, is, “A ma dernière permission, avant ma blessure, il a tout de suite couru à moi. Il était gai, il était content, il riait, il empoignait mon casque, il me tirait la barbe” (Rémi 72). Lazé makes several other remarks about the bond between him and his child, and the narrative makes it clear that he cherishes the love and presence of his son a lot, meaning that the loss of the bond would be extremely impactful for him. Another prominent indication was that he places a lot of emphasis on the relationship between father and son, even saying that it would be a worse fate to lose your son than it would be to lose your face: “Voyez-vous, quand j’apprends qu’un père a perdu son fils sur le front, il me semble que c’est plus terrible encore que d’être arrangé comme je suis !” (Rémi 80). The first visit starts off as the reader may hope for, his son is alerted of his arrival and seems rejoiced “Gérard, accroupi, joue dans le sable. Il se dresse sur ses petites jambes, il accourt en criant : - Papa ! Papa !” (Rémi 80). Nonetheless, the scene quickly turns dismal as the boy rejects his father with a simple phrase,

“Pas papa ... pas papa !”(Rémi 81). This rejection reiterates Lazé’s belief that losing your son is worse than losing your face, Lazé enters a state of complete dejection and insinuates that the policy of ignorance enforced at the hospital through the deprivation of visual self-reflection and the non-confrontational demeanor of the medical staff. Lazé puts his plight in the conditional past of ‘they should have told me’—they should have told him how disturbing his facial injuries were or how they could potentially be perceived by his family. Henriette responds to his depression by reflecting on the situation herself, which frames the question posed in the forward of the novel, where she does not feel it is disrespectful to tell the facially injured that their injuries are sometimes met with disgust, especially at first glance. Henriette’s internal reaction to Lazé’s situation is revealed to the reader as : “Le désespoir, la honte, l’impuissance m’oppressent. Oui, c’est vrai, à l’hôpital, dès qu’on a surmonté sa propre épouvante, on n’a qu’un désir: leur faire croire qu’ils ne sont pas si terrifiants que ça ! - Et voilà le résultat” (Rémi 81). The result in this case is the breakdown of Lazé and the spoiling of his joyful disposition: it leaves him entirely and he becomes a shell of who he was, until the final, disturbing, result, “Cette nuit, quand tout dormait, il s’est ouvert une veine avec son canif” (Rémi 85). In the case of Lazé, it seems that a different course of action regarding the reaction of others to his facial injuries may have done him so good. Unfortunately, it remains entirely speculative.

The inability to observe one’s own facial wounds visually, and to be denied accurate descriptions of the injuries gruesomeness, can have fatal consequences. The case of Lazé, from *Les Hommes sans visage*, demonstrates this very accurately. Lazé does not ignore the fact that he is in a facial injury ward, and understands that he has some injuries—however, the extent of his injuries is never made clear to him. So, he maintains his cheerful and gay disposition despite his facial injury. No one, especially not Henriette, is capable of relaying to him that his face has the

potential to inspire complex feelings of disgust and horror. Due to this, Lazé is prematurely reunited with his family, although his son rejects him. This rejection causes Lazé to spiral eventually leading to his suicide by opening his wrist vein with a letter knife. This case is particularly interesting as it shows how the delay of the dialectical tension between self and injured self creates an imbalance that can be disastrous. Lazé was not provided with an accurate account of his injury and therefore was able to maintain his optimistic demeanor and therefore suffered no chasm between his uninjured self and his injured self. Lazé is forced to submit his face before the Other and rely almost exclusively (still possessed tactile senses) on their descriptions of his state in order to maintain his identity. Given that the narrator paints Lazé as misinformed about the condition of his self, it is not a stretch to state that he was estranged from himself in a certain manner by being denied the ability to experience the depersonalizing tension of facial injury found in accounts of those with facial injuries and sight. While in the case of Lazé the alteration of his consciousness did not render a representation of living in a dream-like state, although his consciousness was altered in a manner that conceived and executed its own undoing - perhaps the most ultimate and extreme form of estrangement from the self.

Conclusion : Depersonalization as a Discursive Instrument

Revisiting the Destruction and Reconstruction

Answering simple questions is a difficult endeavor. For example, to answer the question “what does it mean to have a body?” quickly becomes complicated, as we ask ourselves if we *have* a body or we *are* a body. The safest answer, as reflected in the work of Maren Wehrle, is that it is a combination of both *having* and *being*. Yet, even this “safe” answer is unsatisfying because it is too broad. So, what should we make of the rapport between these verbs and subjectivity? Especially in the case of compromised subjectivity, such as what is observed in the experience of depersonalization. These are the fundamental questions that I explored throughout this work. As a response, my approach examines the destruction and reconstruction of the body and its relationship to subjectivity. In this manner, the body is more than an object subjected to *being* and *having*; it is also a subject objectified by *absence* and *presence*.

World War One offers a unique vantage point for such an inquiry, presenting high volumes of traumatic injury coupled with unprecedented socio-technological means for repair. The Great War illustrates the human being as an entity that can be torn apart and put back together. Although these reconstructions were not perfect, they nonetheless offer great insight into the limits of our flesh and our subjective attachment to it. Investigating this primordial link paired well with dialectical thinking, which can consider the same body as absent and present simultaneously as well as during different moments, i.e., the “whole” body, the injured body, the depersonalized body and the repaired body. Looking over the whole project reveals that these injuries can be categorized into a dialectical framework of absence-in-presence and presence-in-absence, which mirror and interact with one another in complex ways.

To a certain degree the experience of depersonalization was reported or represented by all participants of the war, including those unfortunate enough to just find themselves caught in the midst of it: soldiers, medical professionals, workers, artists, intellectuals and civilians. Synthesizing my work demonstrates that depersonalization is more than merely a side effect of trauma. In what follows, I will reiterate the evidence from my work that supports this claim, briefly expand or question this evidence, make comparisons between chapters, and gesture toward what remains to be studied.

Presence-in-Absence

Throughout this dissertation one theme frequently presented itself: absence. In one way or another each chapter explores the theme of absence. Blast trauma and medical amputation were the main causes of amputation, which I explored in my first and fourth chapters; the first chapter examines limb amputations while the fourth chapter focuses on disfigurement. Absence in these cases referred to an empirical lack. I demonstrated how the immediate trauma resulting in these absences lead to moments of intense separation between the body and self.

For instance, Cendrars, in his work *J'ai saigné*, describes his pain after losing his arm as “ahurissante,” as a pain “...qui me faisait sortir hors de moi, qui troublait mes réflexes les plus élémentaires, me désorientait, me déséquilibrait et me faisait perdre jusqu’à la notion exacte de ma dimension corporelle.” In this instance, Cendrars is displaced by a generalized sense of pain, a sensation that should, if anything, localize him along with his sense of self. His sense of self is so severely dislocated that he loses the notion of his corporeal dimensions. In this sense his body becomes strange to him, a vivid example of a depersonalized state.

Comparable to Cendrars is the example of Adrien in *La Chambre des officiers*, who suffers a severe facial injury even before he reaches the trenches. Similar to Cendrars, Adrien's initial recollections after the injury are related to the narrator as moments of disorientation. He states that he wakes up a few hours after the accident to pain, "si forte et si diffuse que je suis incapable d'en localiser l'origine précise." After exploring his mouth with his tongue, he decides to stop and precedes to fluctuate between moments of lucidity and senselessness, but not before noting that, "C'est tout ce vide qui me fait souffrir." Both Adrien and Cendrars point to the capacity of pain to disrupt corporeal awareness; in both cases, absence is represented as a generalized presence, impossible to locate but nonetheless present. Exploring the paradox of a present absence was a major theme throughout several chapters, albeit in highly variable ways.

The most perplexing of a presence-in-absence can be found in the case of a phantom limb, where an individual feels the presence of a previous limb despite its apparent absence. Blaise Cendrars's experience with multiple simultaneous phantom limbs is a particularly illuminating example; while he is laying on a gurney shortly after his injury, he compares himself to a buddha with many arms, "...comme à bouddha, un éventail de bras sans cesse renaissants...." By applying the Merleau-Pontian notion of *la chair du monde* to Cendrars phantom, I established how the bond between the visible and invisible can help us navigate the complexity of the presence-in-absence paradox. His notion highlights that while our subjectivity maintains tight bonds to the visible world, our objective side is uncovered through the particularities of our existence that are invisible. I contend that the invisibility of the phantom limb bears a resemblance to the other invisible aspects of our being, making the objectivity of our body apparent to us. Furthermore, I linked this objectification of the body to moments of depersonalization as recounted by Sacks, whose patients viewed their limbs as mere things.

Pain disrupting bodily integrity and phantom limb are quintessential examples of a presence-in-absence, however, I also highlighted the inverse throughout my dissertation, absence-in-presence—which implicates just the prevalence of depersonalization within this overarching paradox.

Absence-in-Presence

Within the context of depersonalization, a physical presence often points to a profound absence. Starting with the example of Kaiser Wilhelm II, we see that the presence of his arm was only a reminder of its absence; this absence reveals, on a deeper psychoanalytical level, the absence of maternal love, which is theorized as having implications in his tactless politics. However, the role of amputator best exemplifies absence-in-presence. I used Sigmund Freud's castration complex to show how the Kaiser compensated for a lack of power he integrated into his personality due to his physical condition. He compensated by acting aggressively with his family, often increasing tensions between the great powers of the world at the beginning of the twentieth century. As Christopher Clark demonstrates, Wilhelm's aggressive attitude was more of a spectacle than a reality; he often backed down on his threats when he was tested. This reinforces the notion that his power was compensating for a lack, and that this power was mostly absent, despite putting it forward as present.

Other key examples also feature an absence-in-presence as a lack of power or agency, notably, the experience of the surgeons and those who were deemed "savages." First, the untenable volume of amputations that surgeons had to perform led to exhaustion. This exhaustion, in turn, caused experiences that were akin to depersonalization: feeling like a robot or inside a dream-world. The ether used by the surgeon mirrored the depersonalizing aspect of

their work. It was used to stabilize soldiers before surgery engendered side effects that mirror the experience of the depersonalized state. Interestingly, ether draws a parallel back to pain, because it was used to lower the pain of amputation and blast wounds. Not only did pain provoke an inability to precisely delineate the body, but the inverse is also true: taking the pain away causes dissociation from the body that can no longer feel itself. Therefore, the surgeon is an example of how labor hollows out an individual, to such a degree that they begin to detach in notable ways. It is important to note that this is actually an effective strategy from a medical professional; if they were too attached to their patients then the work would be even more exhausting. An emotional numbness was a necessity.

Truly exemplary of labor's ability to excavate subjectivity from the body is the work of Diop who writes a character that is the epitome of absence-in-presence—a living absence that comes to be inhabited by a dead loved one. In *Frère d'âme*, Alfa loses the entire identity attached to his self, a perfectly depersonalized individual. He asks himself questions that have very straightforward answers for those who are not depersonalized, such as, “Où suis-je ?” and “Qui suis-je ?” While these questions could also pertain to an amnesiac, the reference to depersonalization is bolstered by an interrogation over bodily ownership: “ J’essaie d’ouvrir des yeux qui ne sont pas les miens, de bouger qui ne m’appartiennent pas, mais qui m’appartiendront tout à l’heure, je le pressens.” These are classic examples that easily lend themselves to a depersonalized interpretation. However, when the element of temporality is added to the question of depersonalization, it can be further complicated. Alfa does not only experience an absence of self, but also the absence of a future. After the death of Mademba, Alfa can no longer project himself into the future. This is reflected in the verb tenses that he employs, such as the conditional past to express regret and the lack of future tense.

Alfa and Mademba's service in the French military can be conceptualized as hollow as well, a metaphor that points to an empty existence that simultaneously mirrors economic realities of the *tirailleurs*' involvement in World War One. Alfa and Mademba took on a great deal of labor in order to enter into the French military; their reward was ultimately sterile and deleterious. Surrendering upward socio-economic mobility despite repeated honest efforts points to a cycle where one has to go through motions robotically—where there is no underlying reason or goal, only action. This type of cycle hollows out an individual's humanity, leaving it open for possession, as is the case for Alfa. The theme of absence is much more abstract in this case: it implies an absence of a viable future. What else could we consider as a better example as an absence-in-presence than that which persists in spite of having no means to project itself into a future, so much so that an entire identity is sacrificed in order to make room for the piece of reality, i.e., Mademba, that made that future viable in the first place.

The questions of labor, time, depersonalization, and the notion of absence-in-presence are also asserted in the chapter on prosthetics. Arguably, prosthetics are also the very definition of an absence-in-presence. They present mechanical reproductions of limbs and facial structures, but remain absent in their inability to fully be integrated into subjectivity. This connects to how I analyzed prosthetics in the factory setting. Moreover, a link can also be drawn between this absence-in-presence and society at large.

The Spirit of Fracture

Much like the depersonalized body, a prosthetic functions like a presence that feels absent due to the fact that they cannot be fully integrated into a user's subjectivity. As established in earlier chapters, the absence surrounding prosthetics is not solely physical. In fact, I analyzed

three principal categories of prosthetics: mobility, cognitive, and sensory. I focus on advertisements of mobility prosthetics in order to underline the importance they placed on realness, camouflage, nature, and mimesis. Embedded in the language of prosthetic limb advertisements during the period of World War One are words like natural, serious, and real. These word choices underline the importance society places on fully intact and native body parts. The main goal of the mobility prosthetic is functionality, the promotional rhetoric frames the goal of the prosthetic to be unnoticeable.

Camouflaging the prosthetic into the body was a major objective. Coincidentally, French painter, Lucien-Victor Guirand, is credited with developing military camouflage during World War One to help soldiers blend in with their surroundings. Drawing parallels between these two forms of concealment suggests that it is dangerous for the amputee to be discovered in public by a stranger, just as it was dangerous for the soldier to be discovered in the field by the enemy. Expanding this theme into the realm of depersonalization, we can inquire how the self, or personality, can be camouflaged into its surroundings. Roger Caillois develops this possibility in his article “Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia” arguing for, “depersonalization by assimilation to space.” Caillois shows that when personality assimilates to a space, it is subsumed by it, resulting in a profound depersonalization.

Caillois compares depersonalization through assimilation to space to the fear of the dark, a space that one can feel consumed in—feel a part of and lost in. This bears a strong resemblance to the *il y a* which I explored in my fourth chapter with the deep, black holes present in facial injuries. Assimilation to darkness conjures up images of “no return” or infinity. Veterans with these facial injuries were thrown into a mental darkness, which was incredibly difficult to recover from. Covering these absences with facial prosthetics successfully was a difficult task;

the face needs to be much more dynamic than a limb and therefore static prosthetics could only temporarily hide the reality of an injury for so long. Facial prosthetics, despite the great talent of the artists designing them, were unable to accomplish this task of making the wearer blend in with their surroundings very challenging.

The inability of injured veterans to camouflage themselves into society was the cause of a profound sense of dejectedness for many veterans. This represents the most profound example of greatest absence-in-presence that I laid out in this dissertation. In *Les chambre des officiers*, Adrien's facial process of facial reconstruction highlights the destabilization of identity through facial reconstruction when he encounters his reflection in a window. He is so affected by the image that he vomits, unable to admit that it is his reflection, relying on vocabulary that implies a sense of unreality. The experiences of the facially wounded were so harrowing that the depersonalization from their former intact identity, in extreme cases resulted in suicide, as it did for Lazé in *Les hommes sans visage*.

The imperative for camouflage brings up the broader question of collectivity versus the individual: the prosthetic needs to be camouflaged into the body, like the individual needs to be camouflaged into society. This sense of individuality was further subsumed into the industrial factory, depersonalizing the worker in a manner that evokes Georg Lukàcs's theories on the alienation of labor. While historical evidence is largely limited to photographs of amputees completing factory work with specialized prosthetics, it points to a radical blending of man and machine. As one individual may be outfitted with several different devices to complete an array of highly specific tasks with minimal skill, one can ponder where the prosthetic and subject ends and the machinery begins. Aside from this segregation of subject and object, I point out in this

chapter that depersonalization is achieved in the factory mainly through the repetitive tasks, noises, and large open environment.

Due to these aspects of the factory, there is a striking comparison to be made between the contemplative, alienated state of the factory worker and battlefield hypnosis covered in my first chapter. The machinery of the factory can be understood as an encompassing prosthetic, yet the extraction of subjectivity from the individual through the environment is more indicative of an amputation which is a presence-in-absence. This mirrors battlefield hypnosis as an amputation of self from a soldier due to the repetition of shell blasts, insomnia, coldness, etc.,. In both instances, there is an undoubtable loss of agency, lending itself to the notion of absence in presence.

The immense impact of the war on the bodies and psyches of the veterans immediately became a political battlefield, one that the work of Antoine Prost highlights. My research highlights the differences between the representations of the war from the point of view of the government—which framed their success of rehabilitating veterans as a success for the state with the portrayals of artists who experienced the events. For example, Blaise Cendrars's direct references to globalization which speaks to individuals being consumed by the masses. Furthermore, the writing style of the time period also indicated a shift away from placing the importance on an individual hero, instead opting to let the individual melt into the masses of soldiers, collectively singing and marching.

The artist's reality really stands in direct contrast to rhetoric of the government, who intervened to use injured veterans as political pawns; the delegation of *gueules cassées* being sent to signing of the Treaty of Versailles is a particularly potent example. In the larger societal considerations, the absence-in-presence points to a loss of the individual in the mass, which ironically became a more difficult task for those who were unable to conform to a typical

individual, making their deviation glaringly prominent. Furthermore my historical analysis of the French treatment of the *tirailleurs* underscores this dynamic, pointing to a government that highlighted its own success as it saw it beneficial while neglecting the lived realities of individuals. The systemic dehumanization of the *tirailleurs* severed them from French society, serving as a stark example of a collective depersonalization.

The term prosthetic extends beyond the physical into the cognitive. The trauma of the war acts as a cognitive prosthetic, imparting memory into subsequent generations and handing down the legacy of fragmented identity to them. The representations of war victims by artists outright rejected the government sponsored notion that they were heroes. *Skat Players* by Otto Dix uses visual rhetoric to demonstrate that these men were deeply broken and in pain, which seems to be the cultural lesson that has carried through into modernity especially when considering the work of Diop and Dugain. This implies that the pain of the injured veterans was what stuck as a cognitive prosthetic, undermining the government's attempts to sanitize their pain and trauma. However, artists like Dix made these representations after the trauma of the war reintegrated itself back into society after the war. What is truly fascinating is the seeming anticipation of this cognitive prosthetic in the work of the Cubists that preceded the war; they seem to have predicted, to a certain degree, the fracturing of the individual through their fragmented collage style. This suggests a spirit of fracture, where the subject fracture passes through both the universal and the particular, localized in the before, during, and after of World War One.

Placement and Impact

Due to the highly interdisciplinary nature of this research, it has potential to be relevant to several different fields. Specifically, my work makes two major theoretical interventions. First, depersonalization is a discursive instrument that can be applied to cultural and historical materials. Second, this methodology elaborates an argument that challenges Levinas's academically prevalent theory of the face. I envision that this research is most pertinent within the fields of French and Francophone studies, medical humanities, and disability studies.

Depersonalization does have roots in phenomenology, but it has long been neglected. There have only been rudimentary attempts to harness its interpretative powers, such as the term "prosthetize," coined by Andrew Apter, accounting for the ability of depersonalization to transform subjectivity into a mere thing. Aside from such work, depersonalization is largely used within a psychological context, as a diagnostic term. My intervention highlights the key components of the experience of depersonalization: feeling like a robot, loss of agency, living in a dreamworld, feeling unreal, etc., and applies them to works of French literature. The utility of depersonalization shines brightest in the contexts of severe trauma; it furnishes us with an ability to articulate what may seem unarticulable: the experience of unreality. Consequently, it permits us to integrate the inverse of our everyday mode of existence in a reality, helping to comprehend the dialectical tension between the real and unreal. As I have shown, however, depersonalization is not bound to the context of severe trauma. Once a framework of articulating the unreal is established. It then becomes possible to point to the qualities of unreality that exist in places, such as the factory, unfair economic practices, or prosthetic limb advertisements that we previously may have ignored. What was a practically challenging exercise was trying to integrate this type of thinking into pre-existing philosophies that were inextricably linked to my project, such as that of Emmanuel Levinas's writings in *totalité et infini* on the face.

In order for Levinas's argument to hold, we need the second-person singular formal. This creates the un-totalizability of the Other—something that cannot be contained and, therefore, hints at the idea of infinity. However, in cases of depersonalization, such as we see with Adrien, we note that the argument can come to be without the need for a separate and Other being. Adrien does possess a rather unique perspective, as he inhabits a perspective that he does not consider his own, but it is nonetheless his perspective. This recycles his own manner of describing his own situation as unreal but true. By seeing himself as Other we expect, with a Levinasian reading, for the impassable distance between self and other to be implicated due to the fact that the Other's perspective, thoughts, emotions, etc., cannot be revealed by our will to know. However, this is clearly thwarted. If we equate seeing the self as not-self to being the same as seeing the self as Other, then we would expect that there should still exist this infinity between the self and the perceived Other. Yet, in this particular case the self is capable of crossing the chasm that separates self from Other, as he is able to know the most private and intimate interiority of the self perceived as Other. The only possibility of salvaging a framework that remains purely Levinasian is to state that the subject, Adrien in this case, does not see his reflection as truly an Other, but rather still as self, but in a novel way. Even if this is adopted as a stance to remain faithful to Levinas, we still have problems articulating what the self means when it is very clearly articulated as 'Other' by the narrator in the text.

The major complication stems from the importance given to the idea of infinity. Levinas uses the idea of infinity to assign a great deal of importance to the Other, yet it becomes a bit awkward when this seemingly Divine importance is assigned to the self. It would seem pertinent to begin reshaping the philosophy of Levinas by looking at alternative ways of thinking about how the transformation of the face can be so impactful without relying heavily on the idea of

infinity. Just as the surgeons of the day turned toward plasticity to reconstruct the disfigured soldiers of World War One, I turned toward Catherine Malabou's work to reconstruct the theory of Levinas to account for the depersonalized subject.

While the major contention of my work is philosophical, its highly specific focus on facial injury will likely appeal to those interested in disability studies or medical studies more immediately rather than to a broader philosophical community. Unlike Levinas's theories surrounding the face, which enjoy widespread academic application, my topic inherently deals with medicine and disability. Furthermore, given that I looked predominantly at French literature and French art, it will likely be engaging to scholars whose works center on authors such as Cendrars, Diop, Dugain, or Rémi. My work on depersonalization adds a different approach to these texts, an approach that adds some perspective to the already vibrant discussion around these novels.

Facing Forward

I anticipate three main avenues for future exploration stemming from this project. The first is an application of Jacques Derrida's *différance* to prosthetics and atypical body shapes to highlight the decentered notion of truth in regard to an idealized body. This type of research would bring deconstructivist texts into conversation with the phenomenological texts that I used to create a framework around depersonalization. Similar intersections have been explored by psychoanalyst and literary scholar Dr. Monika Loewy who draws parallels between the experience of BIID and the theories of Derrida, noting that for Derrida, "language and identity are in constant flux and thus decentered." (Loewy 229) and suggests that, "that rupture and splitting cannot be disentangled from a coming together" (Loewy 299). In this type of thinking, fracture is

just as valid as completeness.; Unity is predicated on separation and therefore the desire to be complete is not a truth or a necessity—it is merely a difference. Derrida’s work on *différance* could add depth to the ambiguous meanings of wholeness that are challenged by depersonalization.

Second, distancing my work even further away from the western psychiatric hegemony would be an important step in integrating a more comparative approach to depersonalization, which I believe is a universal occurrence. I gather this from the work *An Impossible Inheritance* of Kilroy-Marac who explores the tension between integrating western psychiatric practice into Senegalese cultural interpretations of mental illness. Furthermore, trauma itself is a western concept, as argued by Branach-Kallas, therefore; determining if depersonalization is a universal concept will require cross cultural competency to understand how “unreality” is conceptualized in different cultural contexts. This is especially vital when trying to study depersonalization completely outside of the realm of trauma.

Finally, extensive archival research is necessary in order to uncover the extent of amputees who returned to work in factories. A study focusing solely on this post-war reality would be very impactful in terms of pushing the conceptual boundaries between subject and object—an aspect I hinted at by reading industrial labor through Caillois. Such an undertaking would require a more rigid framework in regards to differentiating between labor and work would be necessary, such as can be found in Hannah Arendt’s *The Human Condition*.

My dissertation has shown that depersonalization is much more than a medical side effect of trauma. I have shown a deep link between the activity of war and its capacity to fracture the individual, but I also highlighted how this is part of a dialectic, ironically proving to be part of our reality. The modern world seeks to tear the subject apart and reconstitute it again, the

intermediary phase—being torn apart and awaiting a new constitution—is a state of unreality, a stage that helps us cope with the destruction and lays bear the state of becoming, where it is difficult to make a claim of “reality,” but not correct to ascribe a state of non-being to it. It appears that in the coming times, the lessons of World War One will not take a backseat; rather, we should expect to find ourselves increasingly more subject to depersonalization.

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