BODY AND MIND: A COMPARISON OF PHOTOGRAPHIC DEPICTIONS OF PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY WOUNDED BRITISH SOLDIERS DURING THE GREAT WAR

by

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STATEMENT OF THESIS APPROVAL

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ABSTRACT

Perhaps the most heart wrenching legacy of the First World War is the profound, lasting impact the conflict had on its participants. Hundreds of thousands of British men returned home from the Western Front with bodies and minds torn by the new weapons of industrialized warfare. While both severely physically and mentally wounded men were left debilitated by their experiences in the trenches, and were thus dependent on government pensions for survival, these two groups of wounded veterans were not represented in a similar manner to the British civilians at home. This thesis examines the photographs of physically wounded men and soldiers suffering from shell shock from the Great War. Using masculinity and disabilities studies as tools of analysis, the positive regard surrounding newly disabled veterans becomes clear. The images of wounded men deliberately paint a picture of plucky, stoic, and independent individuals: the defining characteristics of a true man in this historical moment. These positive presentations of physically disabled men were created to be widely circulated to the British public, often as fundraising tools for the hospitals where they received care. Other pictures of the disabled tell a slightly different narrative, that of broken men being restored to their role as potential breadwinners through the healing treatments administered by the British government. In this manner, the government that sent these men to their dismemberment is also responsible for making them whole again.

Unlike the physically wounded men, who were presented as pillars of masculinity, the mentally wounded men's photographs were not intended for public circulation. Pictures of shell shocked men reflect British society's conviction that mental illness was a female malady, and also the British government's lack of a deliberate protocol for dealing with the tidal wave of mental cases returning to Britain from the Western Front. Taken together, the photographic record from the Great War suggests that the physically wounded were redefined as truly masculine beings, while the mentally wounded men were left out of the spotlight, suggesting shame and disappointment with the men whose minds broke before their bodies.

For my family, without whose love and support this would never had been possible. And Cali Katerina Neuve Chapelle Kielia and Socko Smokey Verdun Pershing, under whose watching eyes large tracts of this thesis were written.

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INTRODUCTION

The man in the aging photograph looks like he hasn't slept in months. His eyes stare into the space before him, acknowledging nothing in the bare room that surrounds him. His mouth grimaces as if with the anticipation of explosions that he has left hundreds of miles behind him at the front. His left arm appears emaciated from disuse, although his right arm shows a blur of movement, suggesting nervous tics. The patient in this image displays almost all the hallmark symptoms of shell shock, the mental illness that became forever associated with the First World War. Springing from the trauma of life in the trenches, this image eloquently testifies to the lingering pain and suffering inflicted by the Great War.

However, the image I described does not actually exist. I fabricated this sample photograph, because in reality photographs depicting shell shocked soldiers are quite scarce and difficult to find. In spite of the preponderance of shell shock and traumatic neurosis in the British army, very few images of shell shocked individuals were created, or, if made, avoided destruction in the postwar years. In the Imperial War Museum online archives, out of over 9,000 images of the First World War, there is not one photograph of shell shocked soldiers. In contrast, photographs of physically wounded men have come to symbolize the pain and suffering of the trench warfare associated with World War One. This is a serious omission indeed, when one considers that an estimated

30% of British soldiers during the war suffered from shell shock, compared with only about 12% who were left permanently disabled with physical wounds. [1]

In this thesis I argue that the prevalence of the disabled in the photographic records and the absence of shell shock are evidence of widespread British attitudes that privileged physical injuries over mental injuries and upheld the wounded male body as the epitome of masculinity. I assert that the images readily available and preserved for posterity celebrated the physically wounded men as symbols of British masculinity. From their wounds in battle, to the process of rehabilitation, to a smiling acceptance of their newly disabled status, official photographs represented the courage and triumph of the British soldier to a public coming to terms with a large influx of permanently disabled veterans. Through photographs of wounded men, the British concept of masculinity was retooled to include soldiers whose valor in battle had cost them an arm or a leg.

While the physically disabled soldiers were portrayed by the British Government as war heroes and thus highly masculine, the mentally wounded could not be constructed into figures of masculinity quite as easily. In this historical moment, mental illness was frequently associated with hysteria, a quintessentially female disease.[2] This presumption frequently led to the belief that mental illness was a feminine disorder, which undercut the narrative the British government was trying to create for its veterans. Mental breakdown was associated with failure and shame, and was not considered a masculine response to combat. Shell shocked men, broken in mind and spirit, did not readily lend

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[1] Peter Leese, *Shell Shock: Traumatic Neurosis and the British Soldiers of the First World War* (New York: Palgraves Macmillan, 2002), 10; Deborah Cohen, *The War Come Home: Disabled Veterans in Britain and Germany, 1914-1939* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 193.
[2] Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness, and English Culture 1830-1980* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985), 52.

themselves to a comforting narrative of regeneration and restored masculinity. While physically wounded men could be supplied with an artificial leg or a facial mask to hide mutilating wounds, fixing wounded minds was a much more difficult undertaking.

The soldiers who suffered from shell shock, although they lived through similar experiences as those with physical wounds, did not lend themselves as easily to fit the triumphal narrative that the Ministry of Information wanted to tell. In the British public's mind, and in the professional opinion of some doctors, combat-induced madness was a result of insufficient character and courage. Thus, in the eyes of their countrymen, those soldiers who proved themselves unable to overcome their fear in the face of enemy fire were lacking those traits that were fundamental to masculinity. These negative assumptions about the roots of shell shock led to soldiers suffering from the disorder to feel a sense of shame. The shell shocked soldiers' sense of shame and isolation was reinforced by British society's silence on the topic.

These notions about shell shock constituting a shameful and unmanly malady did not fit well into the rhetoric of the British government surrounding the war, and did not fit with the British public's understanding of the conflict either. This was the "war to end all wars" and a conflict of this scale demanded sacrifice and bravery from everyone: be they munitions workers, families left at home, and, of course, soldiers doing the actual fighting. The concept of British men cracking under pressure and being unable to complete their task of defending Britain would not have been a popular one. Juxtaposed with the rhetoric and the dominant concept surrounding masculinity in this historical moment, mental breakdown of soldiers was considered a shameful inability to do one's duty in the trenches. There was no heroism in shell shock, and these men did not readily

lend themselves to an uplifting or inspiring narrative. This limited the usefulness of the images created of shell shocked soldiers. Clearly, these images were not well suited for wide circulation for fundraising or morale-raising propaganda purposes. These were the men that no one wanted to talk about or remember.

Despite doing their duty to the best of their ability, shell shocked men were shut out of the cult of masculinity that their physically wounded brethren enjoyed. This misunderstanding surrounding the mentally ill carried on through the end of the conflict and stretched into the war's aftermath. Each photograph that was taken during the war, and that survived destruction in the postwar years, offers insight into the minds of the war's participants. They also suggest how those involved in the conflict wanted the war to be perceived on the home front and into posterity.

In spite of the large volume of previous scholarship, interest in the First World War and the men involved in this struggle has blossomed in the last fifteen years. Renewed interest is shifting the emphasis to new genres of study that have proved vital to understanding this critical moment in twentieth-century history. The study of masculinity and its relationship to combat is one new and particularly relevant topic of research.[3] An outgrowth of gender studies, masculinity studies has proven an ideal tool for examining the powerful underlying assumptions of what it meant to be a man in this historical moment, and how those attitudes impacted the experience of being a soldier in the First World War.

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[3] Jessica Meyer, *Men of War: Masculinity and the First World War in Britain* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Joanna Bourke, *Dismembering the Male: Men's Bodies, Great Britain, and the Great War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); Patrick McDevitt, *May the Best Man Win: Sport, Masculinity and Nationalism in Great Britain and the Empire, 1880-1935* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

Masculinity: a Key Component of Britain at War

British soldiers during the Great War were glorified as highly masculine individuals who would eventually secure victory for Britain and her allies. Great care was taken by the official photographers of the First World War to present the able-bodied men in the trenches as gallant and capable individuals. British soldiers were frequently presented as grinning cheerfully for the camera, or at the very least, stoically enduring the difficult and uncomfortable living conditions in the trenches. I would assert that the significance of the emotional restraint presented in these photographs goes beyond painting an optimistic picture for loved ones back home. These men are being presented as being fully in control of their bodies and emotions, which was one of the defining attributes of a masculine individual in this historical moment. Presenting soldiers as quintessentially manly men supports the argument that the predominant gender roles of the time played an important role in the recruitment and propaganda practices in British society during the Great War.[4] In this manner, those who performed well on the battlefield were considered real men, while those who were reluctant to volunteer or who faltered in combat could not be considered true men. These failed soldiers were often construed as feminine because they exhibited the characteristics of passivity and unrestrained emotionality so often associated with women.

The feminization of shell shocked soldiers is apparent in the photographs taken during the Great War. The lack of care in presenting these men as well-groomed, or even as being mentally capable of understanding their surroundings, suggests that the same

[4] Nicolleta Gullace, "White Feathers and Wounded Men: Female Patriotism and the Memory of the Great War" *The Journal of British Studies* Vol. 36 No. 2, (April 1997), 178-206.

pains were not taken with shell shocked men as with their counterparts who were physically wounded. The association in the British mind between mental illness and femininity may have stemmed from asylums being filled primarily with women patients in the years before the Great War. Early psychologists believed that a woman's reproductive organs interfered with her ability to be rational and emotionally regulated, which led to the assumption that mental illness was predominantly a female trait.[5] The photographs of shell shocked men lack a coherent, unifying presentation. The lack of a consistent format to document war-induced mental illness supports a common assertion among historians of shell shock, that the British government lacked a standardized, deliberate protocol for treating shell shock and for dealing with it publicly as a social issue.[6]

While the British government struggled to handle the invisible wounds of mental illness, it equally struggled with the tidal wave of physically wounded men that washed up on British shores from the Western Front. The unprecedented number of men who suffered horrendous wounds, but survived their injuries and returned to their society as disabled veterans makes the Great War an event that is particularly well suited for the field of disability studies. The privileged representation of wounded British soldiers in photographs from the Great War suggests that this conflict ushered in a shift away from the attitudes held about disabled individuals in the Victorian Era. For these men, their disability and disfigurement was something that could be read on their bodies by other

[5] Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness, and English Culture, 1830-1980* (London: Virago Press, 1987), 52.
[6] Peter Leese, *Shell Shock: Traumatic Neurosis and the British Soldiers of World War One* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 33.

people, and disfigurement became a marker of their new identity within society.[7] Rather than present the disabled as helpless individuals that elicited pity, photographs of disabled veterans presented vibrant men who still possessed the masculine virility that led them to enlist and serve bravely in the first place.

The study of disability and its place in society has emerged as a multidisciplinary approach that draws on the humanities, social sciences, and medicine.[8] The focus of disability studies is to understand disability as a cultural or social product. The approach of disability studies differs from a medical or rehabilitation-oriented approach, which views disability as problematic and strives to make the body conform to their definition of "normal" functioning.[9] This relatively new tool of analysis, emerging in the late 1970s as an outgrowth of the disability rights movement,[10] has found a permanent home in the discourse on the First World War.

The prevalence of disability-related works in Great War scholarship perhaps can best be explained by the nature of the conflict itself. The First World War ushered in a terrifying new era of combat, with industrialized weapons capable of wreaking unprecedented havoc on the human body. The large numbers of First World War wounded men returning to Britain made them a visible aspect of British society in an unprecedented fashion.[11] Coupled with a desire to rehabilitate the wounded and the

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[7] David Gerber (Ed.) *Disabled Veterans in History. Corporealities: Discourses on Disability* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), 6.
[8] See Leonard Davis (Ed.) *The Disability Studies Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2006); David Johnstone, *An Introduction to Disability Studies* (London: David Fulton, 2001).
[9] Nadja Durbach, *Spectacle of Deformity*: *Freak Shows and Modern British Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 27.
[10] Ibid., 27.
[11] Joanna Bourke, *Dismembering the Male: Men's Bodies, Britain, and the Great War* (London: Reaktion Books, 1996), 32.

British governments' attempt to define its obligations to these men the concept of disability became socially relevant in this historical moment.[12]

While studying the wounded of the Great War offers unique insights into the human costs of the conflict, this focus also overlooks the hundreds of thousands of men who were killed in the conflict, and the suffering this created for the families and friends left behind. A related theme in World War One historiography is the study of grief and its impact on the belligerent nations. This large-scale bereavement and the difficulty of identifying and returning remains from the battlegrounds led families to express their grief in new and traditional ways, including military cemeteries and war memorials.[13] Memorializing the dead is a fundamentally different goal from that of the photographers from the Great War. The photographs from the Great War intended to document the events unfolding and the people involved in them, not necessarily commemorate the fallen. In this manner the war memorials, while a great source for visual historians of the Great War, will not be discussed further in this paper.

These genres of historical writing have greatly expanded our understanding of the Great War, and given a voice to those men who were physically and mentally wounded by the war, who passing years had silenced. Thus far, these concepts have been treated separately in the historiography, which I argue may not accurately reflect their interwoven nature. Neither shell shock nor physically wounded men occurred completely independently of each other during the Great War; both stemmed from the brutal conditions and carnage of the trenches. Both of these maladies were understood by

[12] Durbach,30.
[13] See Jay Winter's classic text *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Jay Winter, *Remembering War: The Great War Between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006).

their countrymen as unpleasant possibilities associated with serving in the First World War, and to fully understand the impact of the Great War on British society, both physical wounds and shell shock must be taken into account together.

I argue that British assumptions about what made a man a masculine figure played a key role in their presentation in visual images before and during the conflict. I plan to use masculinity studies as a lens to examine photographs of both physically and mentally wounded men. In this historical moment, the concepts of masculinity and martial prowess were tied together through the bonds of government propaganda, societal expectations, and previously held attitudes about gender.[14] Using masculinity studies as a tool of analysis will enable me to explore the attitudes of British society towards its disabled veterans as evident in photographs of physically and mentally wounded veterans of the Great War. By searching for clues about which group of men, the physically or the mentally wounded, are presented to the viewer as truly masculine figures, I will be able to tease out British society's complex attitudes towards its veterans. Even though a soldier who had lost both his legs would be just as great a financial burden on the Ministry of Pensions as a shell shocked man who never fully regained his ability to function, that both these men are not presented in photographs as equally helpless and feminized by their war experience speaks to complex attitudes held by the British public in this historical moment.

[14] Heather Streets, *Martial Races: The Military, Race, and Masculinity in British Imperial Culture, 1857-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 157.

Visual Images and Their Role in the History of the Great War

Although all these British historians have relied on a wide variety of sources to construct compelling narratives, I believe the visual history of the Great War has not yet been fully utilized as useful historical evidence. Visual images, such as photographs, can be a rich source . That historians have previously had a bias in favor of written texts, and have used visual images as decoration or simply a supplement to textual documents trivializes them and therefore any historical insight they may possess is overlooked.[15]

Visual images, whether they be photographs, political cartoons, advertisements or even simpler things like candy wrappers, also come from a particular moment in history, and can offer contextual clues to life in a historical period just as a textual document can. The visual culture of a given time period played a role in its inhabitants' everyday life, and thus plays a crucial role in understanding the historical experience in that moment. Like textual documents, visual illustrations and photographs are also manifestations of a society's material culture, and they are both equally important pieces of the whole. Thus, text and visual artifacts are both material residue of a culture in a particular historical moment, and can provide equally important insights into the past.[16]

The value of visual images in history is not in assessing their aesthetic value, but in examining their meaning and significance in historical context. Images offer several avenues of assessment that are less obvious to apply to textual documents in this aspect, such as an analysis of the medium chosen to create the image: a sketch or a photograph, for instance. The methods used to produce and distribute an image present insight into

[15] Michael Wilson, "Visual Culture, a Useful Category of Historical Analysis?" In *The Nineteenth Century Visual Cultural Reader* ed. Vanessa Schwartz and Jeannene Przybliski (New York: Routledge, 2004), 7.
[16] Ibid., 5.

numerous different aspects of the image, such as the intended message and audience. Examining composition, the use of space and color, and the gaze of the subject are all potential sources of insight when working with visual culture that are not as readily available for analysis when dealing with a strictly written source. Observing the interplay between individuals in a photographs, such as who is at the center of the image and who is pushed to the fringes can illustrate power dynamics at work that a textual document's author may not explicitly state or even imply.

To assume that the messages of images, intended or otherwise, always mirror the themes of the writing in documents from that era is not inherently correct. However this is in no way to suggest that historians must follow an either/or approach. The interplay between text and image, such as a photograph in a book and the caption, is one manner that the two sources may be analyzed together to form a more complete picture than either could offer alone. The juxtaposition of textual and visual sources can highlight differences and confirm themes common in both genres.[17]

However, this is not to suggest that written documents are valuable only for the texts they contain. The visual historian can glean information even from a strictly written document without illustrations or photographs. The font used, the size of the lettering, what points have been italicized or left unstressed, even the type of paper and ink utilized in creating the document all have significance for the historian who is willing to use visual culture as a tool of analysis.

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[17] See Nicholas Mirzoeff, "What is Visual Culture?" in *Visual Culture: Critical Concepts in Media and Cultural Studies* ed. Joanne Morra and Marquard Smith (New York: Routledge, 2006); Matthew Rampley, "Visual Rhetoric" in *Exploring Visual Culture: Definitions, Concepts, Contexts* ed. Matthew Rampley, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005).

While some of the aforementioned scholars, notably Seth Koven, have turned to photographs and postcards to supplement their narratives, no previous historian has used photographs of the Great War as the primary source of information to explore the wide divide in the British public's perception of its mentally and physically wounded. I am choosing to rely on these photographs as evidence for my argument, because they have thus far been overlooked and they prove to be a rich and previously untapped source . The photographic images created during the Great War, and which avoided destruction in the post war years, offer historians valuable insight in the values of the photographer who created the image and the society that chose to display them. Equally telling are the "silences" in the archive: those people or events that are, perhaps deliberately, not depicted. Choosing not to create or archive images of a certain group implies a desire to keep it out of sight and to keep its presence secret and hidden. These kinds of secrets denote shame or fear. Clues, taken from the subjects of photographs, present and absent, and the culture of shame surrounding them offer important insight not only into British perceptions defining the difference between health and illness, but also the British definition of what it meant to be a man in this historical moment.

The First World War is a conflict that is well suited for this kind of historical inquiry, given the massive amount of visual images generated throughout the four years of combat. Something that sets World War One apart from the conflicts before it is the rich visual history it left behind. This historical moment was captured not only in text through the saved letters and journals of those who lived through it, but also through the lens of a camera. The archives of institutions like the Imperial War Museum and the Wellcome Library bulge with literally thousands of images from the Great War. In

addition, the Gillies archives contain images depicting men who suffered horribly debilitating head and facial wounds, and demonstrate their progress through several stages of treatment towards a less monstrous appearance. Most of these images are readily available and can be viewed online. While numerous books have been compiled over the years that tell the story of the Great War with contemporary images, none have yet generated a narrative of the Great War relying on the images themselves as evidence. After viewing the nine thousand plus (and growing) number of images within the Imperial War Museum's photo gallery, it is readily apparent that the images created of the First World War were carefully stage managed by British official photographers to portray a particular impression of the war to "the folks back home." This stage managing takes two forms: the types of images available to or withheld from the public, and evidence of stage managing the images themselves to convey a certain, not entirely authentic picture of the Great War.

In general, the types of images from the Great War that were considered valuable enough to be archived fall into several different categories. By far the most common image is of gallant Tommies and white colonial soldiers in some form or another, typically hard at work at some war-related task, or engaging the viewer with eye contact. Hundreds of formal portraits of soldiers posing in their uniforms also gaze out from the archive. Medical facilities are another common image in the Imperial War Museum archive, frequently depicting wounded soldiers with stark white bandages and a nurse with a starched uniform standing attentively in the background. Modern machinery is another theme that captured the Great War photographers' attention, and the gallery bristles with images of new, lethal, cutting-edge weaponry. That pictures of weapons

and machines feature so prominently in the photographic record suggests the British felt strongly that industrially-made cutting edge weapons may be the key that would break open the stalemate on the Western Front. These images depict very diverse aspects of the war, but they all present the vast British war machine with the intent to inspire awe and confidence in the viewer. Mammoth dreadnoughts and clean hospitals leave the viewer with a sense that these great advancements in weapons and medicine will ensure an eventual victory. The hard working Tommies, sometimes pictured in far-flung corners of the empire, present the British troops as brave, stoic, and cheerful in difficult circumstances. Many of these images seem to have been created with the self-conscious intent of commemorating an epic event, implying perhaps a sincere believe that the First World War truly would be the "war to end all wars."

Another type of photograph that is fairly common in the Imperial War Museum archive is battlefield landscapes. These images of pock marked lunar landscapes, once towns, villages, and fertile farm land, truly demonstrate the full destructive force of modern warfare. Photographs of devastated land suffice as a proxy for the horrors of total war, by bearing testimony to the power of modern weapons and implying the potential impact of these weapons on human bodies and minds.[18]

The photographic record also points to a more or less deliberate policy of censorship put into effect by the British government almost from the outbreak of hostilities. The Defense of the Realm Act, which was passed in 1914, aimed at preventing the press from revealing any information that would compromise national

[18]Joelle Beurier, "Death and Material Culture: The Case of Photographs during the First World War" in *Matters of Conflict: Material Culture, Memory, and the First World War* ed. Nicholas Saunders (New York: Routledge, 2004), 115.

safety or give the enemy access to sensitive information like troop movements. Another aspect of this act aimed to limit the British public's access to information that was deemed too depressing or that would damage morale on the home front.[19] The British government implemented this law by setting up a Press Bureau, where newspapers and magazines voluntarily submitted their war coverage. This arrangement set the stage for the press to censor themselves, whether through fears of being censored by the government, or through a sense of patriotic duty.[20]

Fears of censorship by the press were justified, because it was not uncommon for visual images to be censored. During the Great War censorship extended beyond the press and even affected the official war artists. Very few photographs from the front lines were made available to the press, and official war artists were commissioned to fill the void.[21] While the war artists' task was to provide visual images of the war, they too were under scrutiny about what was considered appropriate for a mass audience on the home front. Occasionally artists ran afoul of this line and their artwork was censored, such as C.R.W. Nevinson's work "Paths of Glory" which depicted a path to glory that cut through No Man's Land and was littered with two British soldiers' corpses. This painting was deemed inappropriate and was banned from an art exhibition in 1918 because of its unsuitable, graphic, depressing content. However, Nevinson made this

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[19] J. Lee Thompson. *Politicians, the Press, and Propaganda: Lord Northcliffe and the Great War 1914-1919* (Kent: Kent State University Press,1999), 28.

[20] Ibid., 27.

[21] Sue Malvern, *Modern Art, Great Britain, and the Great War (*New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 37.

censorship the message of his painting by covering it with a paper banner that read "censored."[22]

The use of photographs in the British press (which certainly did shy away from graphic photographs of war dead) during the Great War was not uniform across different publications. One of the most widely read British newspapers during the war years, the *London Times,* did not use photographs at all in its war coverage. While the *London Times* did occasionally rely on maps to illustrate key points when discussing the major battles (particularly early in the war) no photographs of locations or of the combatants themselves were used by this paper to report on the progress of the Great War to its readers.

This stands in contrast to the *Illustrated London News*, which, as its name suggests, did use photographs and other visual images in its war coverage. However, the photographs used are vastly outnumbered by the sketches and illustrations created by artists that depict the action at the front. Intriguingly, these illustrations often depict No Man's Land as the artist may have pictured it, which frequently included the war dead of both sides.[23] This suggests that the censors were more willing to allow drawings of death that did not depict the demise of an actual individual, but just an artist's imaginative interpretation. This further suggests that artist's illustrations were not as heavily censored as photographs because they were not perceived to present actual events in the manner of photographs. Thus illustrations were presenting the concept of death, not an

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[22] Ibid., 52.
[23] See Joelle Beurier, "Death and Material Culture: The Case of Photographs during the First World War" in *Matters of Conflict: Material Culture, Memory, and the First World War* ed. Nicholas Saunders (New York: Routledge, 2004); Joanna Bourke, "*An Intimate History of Killing: Hand to Hand Combat in Twentieth Century Warfare* (New York: Basic Books, 2000).

image of a body that is some British woman's son. This was perhaps seen as less problematic because all those viewing the illustration knew it was not real; it was just an artist's rendition that portrayed an imagined scene from the war, not an actual dead British man. Presenting images of the actual British dead could have been perceived as something that was too threatening to the public's morale to risk publishing. This argument holds true as long as death is not the only message of the artwork. Images that focus solely on the death and destruction of the Great War were still deemed as problematic because they could have a negative impact on the public's morale, which explains why Nevison ran afoul of wartime censors.

Equally important is the context of death in these illustrations. It was no secret during the Great War that combat killed men on both sides, and that these casualties were very visible on the battlefields. Yet dead men are presented as the background for a heroic, violent struggle between "our" soldiers and "them," frequently in scenes depicting hand to hand combat.[24] Death is not the focus of these visual narratives, rather it is presented as part of the scenery during a dramatic struggle between fighting soldiers. Presenting death in this context serves to heighten the drama of the scene unfolding before the viewer's eyes, and reminds the viewer that the warring soldiers risk death every day they are in the trenches.[25] However, when artists presented death as the main message of their art work was where they found themselves in trouble, as C.R.W. Nevison found out in 1917.

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[24] Joelle Beurier, "Death and Material Culture: The Case of Photographs during the First World War" in *Matters of Conflict: Material Culture, Memory, and the First World War* ed. Nicholas Saunders (New York: Routledge, 2004), 111.

[25] Ibid., 111.
See Joanna Bourke's text *An Intimate History of Killing: Face to Face Killing in Twentieth Century Warfare* (New York: Basic Books, 2000).

THE PHOTOGRAPH IN WAR

To understand the significance of the British photographic record from the Great War, an understanding of what the photographic image meant for this generation is important. The photograph was still somewhat of a novelty, and its importance on the battlefield or elsewhere in society stemmed from the faith people had in its ability to truthfully capture a moment in time. Unlike other forms of visual arts, like painting, the photograph was believed to be more faithful and more truthful in its depiction of its subjects.[26]

However, Jennifer Tucker asserts Victorian viewers may not have been so naïve regarding the still image; this too is an argument that is crucial to understanding the significance of photographic evidence of the First World War. She asserts the judges of photographic contests during the Great Exhibition of 1851 may have forever altered the path of photographic development in Great Britain by criticizing the submitted photographs as not "useful" or scientifically oriented. This emphasis on photography as a tool for the newly-burgeoning natural sciences, and not an artistic medium, set British photography on a different trajectory from other nations' photographers, particularly those from across the pond, who saw it as a vehicle for artistic expression. One of the first men to take the scientific application of photography seriously was an asylum

[26] Elizabeth Edwards (ed.) *Anthropology and Photography* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

superintendent named Hugh Diamond, who created portraits of his patients by applying traditional modes of medical images: straight-on frontal and side views only.[27]

The Crimean War (1853-1856)

From the assumption that photography was a mirror to reality came not only its power, but also its ability to manipulate its viewers. Photographs taken during the Crimean War (1853-56) by Roger Fenton were intended to serve a different purpose than those created a decade later by Mathew Brady during the American Civil War. While Brady's intention was to create aesthetically pleasing images that would bring him a tidy profit, Roger Fenton's goal was to create a reassuring photographic narrative for the concerned British public at home.[28] After the war correspondent William Russell's damning reports detailing blundering leadership, needless casualties, and the miserable living conditions endured by British soldiers, Roger Fenton was sent to take photographs with the intention of debunking Russell's critique of the Crimean War.

Arguably, Fenton's photographs did fulfill an agenda. Fenton returned to Britain with photographs of peaceful landscape scenes, smiling portraits of officers, and cozy scenes of daily life in a military camp. Any images of life at the front lines or pictures of combat unfolding were out of the question for Fenton, mostly because of the technological limitations of photography in the 1850s. Unlike Brady, Fenton did not choose to document battles by the devastation they left in their wake. In fact, Fenton

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[27] Jennifer Tucker, *Nature Exposed: Photography as an Eyewitness in Victorian Britain* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 28.
[28] Jorge Lewinski, *The Camera At War: A History of War Photography from 1848 to the Present Day* (New York: Simon and Schulster, 1978), 37.

chose not to turn the eye of his camera on the dead and fallen soldiers, even in his most famous work "The Valley of the Shadow of Death" [Figure 1]. The only real indication in this photo that this peaceful valley had earned such a fearful nickname is a dusty road that snakes away into the distance and cannon balls that litter the foreground.

While separated from Mathew Brady by less than a decade, the methods used by these men to capture a conflict on film are markedly different. Brady frequently made the dead the subject of his photographs, Fenton completely shied away from this. The closest Fenton comes to acknowledging the death and carnage that were certainly part of the Crimean War was to photograph tombstones of fallen men.[29] In this manner, Fenton makes an oblique reference to death, but the pain and suffering associated with death in combat are not depicted here. Clearly, Fenton wanted to present only an abstract symbol of death that would not be threatening in any way. Hence, Fenton's personal decision to present the war in this manner may have been tied to his political orientation, or perhaps more likely, his sense of himself as a gentleman first and a photographer second.

The Boer War (1899-1902)

An examination of the Second Anglo-Boer War yields similar results. The Boer War continued the precedent set by Fenton in the Crimean War of not displaying the grisliness of war for combatants, or even documenting the suffering of the civilians who became collateral damage during the struggle. Jorge Lewinski asserts there are no photographs at all depicting the concentration camps in South Africa where Boer women

[29] Ulrich Keller, *The Ultimate Spectacle: A Visual History of the Crimean War* (Amsterdam: Gordon and Breach Publishing, 2001), 158.

Figure 1. *The Valley of the Shadow of Death.*

The J. Paul Getty Museum online Collection. In the public domain.

and children were housed, and where close to 50% of the inhabitants died.[30] While this may be somewhat of an overstatement, the lack (or scarcity) of gruesome images depicting suffering and torment associated with the Second Boer War may be tied to Lord Kitchener's strict censorship policies.[31] His distrust and dislike of the press may have made him less inclined to allow coverage of his troops in battle.[32] The dearth of combat-related images and of suffering civilians cannot be as easily explained away by a lack of portable camera technology, as was the case in the Crimea. By the time the Boer war broke out, the wet-plate method had been replaced by the dry-plate method, which made it possible for photographers to break free from the ball and chain of needing to develop photographs immediately after taking them, and the necessity of a mobile dark room.[33]

The Great War (1914-1918)

By briefly examining the photographic record of the two major conflicts the United Kingdom had involved itself in before the First World War, a clear pattern of the types of photographs that were considered appropriate for public consumption emerges. In both of these wars, images of death and dying, whether of soldiers or civilians, did not suit the mood or understanding that those in charge of the fighting wanted to convey. Since Field Marshall Lord Kitchener was made the Secretary of State for War at the outbreak of the First World War, his attitudes towards the media again were made into policy, a policy that continued on past his untimely demise in 1916. He even went one step further in the Great War: while amateur photographers were allowed to photograph

[30]Jorge Lewinski, *The Camera At War: A History of War Photography from 1848 to the Present Day* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978), 56.
[31] Ibid., 56.
[32] Ibid., 53.
[33] Ibid., 52

select aspects of the Boer War, no civilian photographers were allowed anywhere near the trenches. In fact, while there were thousands of images from the First World War, all of the official photographs depicted only the most benign aspects of the war experience, leaving the hard fighting of battles like the Somme and Passchendaele undocumented by photographs, or at least unavailable to the public back home. This suggests that images of destroyed British bodies on foreign soil did not suit the coverage of the Great War that the British government wanted its citizens to receive.

The British decision to withhold such images from public consumption may very well have stemmed from their concern about alternative interpretations of them. British officials may have anticipated the concern that the viewers of images of dead soldiers would not understand the intended message of gallantry and self-sacrifice. They may have anticipated instead that the public would focus on the carnage depicted before them, as Amy Lyford argued happened in World War One era France.[34] Images of suffering from the front brought into people's living rooms and kitchens, instead of cementing the British public's commitment to the cause of the Great War, may have eroded it by depicting in black and white the true costs of combat.

An image found in the Imperial War Museum Archive that is in many ways representative of the typical photograph of British soldiers from the Great War is Figure 2. This official photograph was presented to the British public as actual footage of soldiers leaving the trenches and charging "over the top" at the Battle of the Somme in October 1916. It seems to capture a defining moment in battle when fears are pushed

[34] Amy Lyford, "The Aesthetics of Dismemberment: Surrealism and the Musee Val-de-Grace in 1917" *Cultural Critique* Vol. 46 (Autumn 2000), 46.

Figure 2, *Over the Top*

By permission of the Imperial War Museum. CO 874.

aside in favor of decisive action, which will eventually lead to a resounding victory. All of the men in the trench are scrambling out or preparing to do so: not one soldier appears hesitant or unwilling to engage in this riskiest action in the Great War. These men are very much in control of the combat situation unfolding around them, and, most importantly, they are in control of themselves. The intended message of the gallant, virile nature of British (and white colonial) masculinity can easily be read here.

According to the Imperial War Museum (IWM), this image was widely published, and apparently reached its intended audience of the British and colonial public at home. However, the image of this battle scene which seems to perfectly capture the moment of bravery was presented to the public under false pretenses. The IWM states that this

photograph was not actually taken in the trenches at the Somme, but was actually created during a training exercise behind the lines.[35] To further the illusion, the image was altered to edit out a breech cover on one of the rifles, a detail that would have destroyed the illusion of soldiers participating gallantly in combat.[36]

Perhaps the wide circulation of this image offers insight into the psychological state of the British public towards the end of one of the largest British battles in the Great War. By October 1916, when this image was created, the Battle of the Somme had been raging for over three months, and the anticipated breakthrough had yet to materialize. The wide use of this image, of British men at their best, implies the Ministry of War Information wanted an image to inspire the people back home, and a photograph of gallant men willingly doing their part was believed to fit the bill.

An argument can be made that this is a typical image in that it captures nicely the "stage managed" aspect of photography of the Great War. Most of the images present in the IWM archive depict healthy men or functioning machines. Conspicuously absent is the other, darker side of this conflict. Of four thousand images in the online archive, only two (as of February 2009) display any dead British soldiers, an obvious oversight if the goal was to depict the war truthfully and objectively to the civilians back home. The other equally glaring oversight is the absence of any images that make reference to shell shock or any other mental illness born of this conflict.

While the Imperial War Museum images do concede that the war was a source of great suffering and misfortune (if not for the British, at least for someone), the most

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[35]Imperial War Museum website: www.iwmcollections.org.uk, accessed April 21st, 2009.
[36] Ibid.

powerful message conveyed by this extensive collection of photographs is what is left unsaid. By focusing the lens of the camera on only certain aspects of the war, the British government lied by omission on several different facets of the war experience. Hundreds of thousands of British men did die in the Great War, by the tens of thousands in the epic battles like the Somme. Yet any image that hints at the loss of British life seems never to have existed, or more likely, was destroyed in the years following the war.

IMAGES OF THE GREAT WAR'S WOUNDED

While the official photographers from the Great War chose not to focus their camera lens on the dead bodies generated by this conflict, they did snap photographs of the war's wounded. These images (few of which are available in the IWM's online archive) fall into two categories: wounded men on the road to recovery, and formalized group portraits of wounded men. While photographs of the wounded men hint at dismemberment and destruction from the front, the complete story told by these images is something entirely different. The empty pant legs and sleeves testify to the horrifying injuries suffered by these men, but the peaceful settings and the calm demeanors of the subjects suggest these wounded men have not only survived these injuries, but also overcome them. Thus the overall message imparted to the viewer is a more comforting narrative, a focus on these wounded men as survivors of injuries who have returned to Britain and are approximating a sense of normality.

Portraits of Physically Wounded Men

Even though British photographers chose to photograph the wounded both in rehabilitation settings and in a more formalized portraits, the portraits are able to tell a more vivid tale because they are able to draw on a rich background of portraiture that

extends back hundreds of years. Ever since the Renaissance, it has been well understood that a portrait is more than just a re-creation of someone's image on canvas, rather it is an attempt to bring the subject to life endowed with hints to who they are in life. Portraits were almost always made with the implicit understanding that they were meant to be displayed in a public setting, and that they would carry a special message to the viewer. This was accomplished by the painter by including within the painting props that hinted at the sitter's social status and settings that implied power or wealth. Another important theme of portraiture comes from clues to social status included in a portrait which offer insight into what could be considered qualities of masculinity in the historical moment it was made.[37] By bringing the conventions of portraiture used by painters into a photograph, the creators of the image were able to combine the traditional aspects of a portrait with the mechanized truthfulness of a photograph. In Figures 3 and 4 the photographers' utilization of portrait conventions is evident.

The message to the British public from these images are two fold. First, the clothing these men are wearing appear to be the "convalescent blues," which were the uniforms assigned to wounded soldiers during their stay in the hospital. The uniforms were intended to serve several functions, the most basic being to provide the wounded men comfortable, sanitary clothing to replace their battlefield uniforms which were frequently dirty, torn, bloodied, and infested with lice after being worn in the trenches.[38] The distinctive blue uniform also served an administrative function in that it made it very simple for hospital personnel to distinguish their patients from any visitors or other

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[37] Wes Shearer, *Portraiture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 11, 42, 30, & 158.
[38] Jeffrey Reznick, "The 'Convalescent Blues' in Fredrick Cayley Robinson's 'Acts of Mercy'" http://wellcomelibrary.blogspot.com/2010/06/convalescent-blues-soldiers-in.html, accessed June 23rd 2010.

Figure 3, *Portrait of Wounded Men at Roehampton Hospital*

By permission of The Imperial War Museum. Q108161.

military personnel who may be at the hospital. Jeffrey Reznick asserts the hospital uniform was used in propaganda to "put the wounded Tommy on public display" and "facilitate public appreciation" for his sacrifice.[39] This implies the convalescent blues were a readily understood symbol in wartime Britain. The symbolic role of the convalescent blues is further suggested by illustrations that depict blue-clad Tommies being bothered with stupid war related questions from civilians around them.[40] These illustrations suggest that civilians were able to recognize the convalescent blues as the uniform of men who had been injured in combat, whether the injury itself was visible or not.

[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid.

Figure 4 *Are We Downhearted?*

By permission of The Imperial War Museum. Q 27815.

Similarly, Nicolleta Gullace argues for the importance of a visual marker to readily identify wounded men. In "White Feathers And Wounded Men," Gullace focuses on the impact on gender roles of recruiting efforts before conscription was instituted in 1916. Some rhetoric at the outbreak of hostilities urged women to use their feminine charm to encourage, or even shame, men into volunteering for the army. This was done by women handing men a white feather: a symbol widely understood to represent cowardice.[41] The visual cues women relied on to differentiate between a coward and a hero was his attire. Men in uniforms were immediately identified with the military, and thus bravery, while men wearing civilian clothing were assumed to not have enlisted, and were therefore deemed shirkers and cowards.[42]

This visual system of distinguishing between cowards and heroes broke down in the later years of the war. Some women continued to hand out white feathers even after opting out of the war was no longer a personal choice with the introduction of conscription in 1916.[43] Gullace uses several firsthand accounts to convey the horror and embarrassment these "white feather women" experienced when they somehow missed obvious signs of injury in combat, like a missing limb, and mistakenly handed out a white feather to a wounded veteran. A key point in all of these anecdotes is the response of the Tommy to the insulting gesture by silently showing his wound, such as an empty sleeve or leg stump.[44] In this manner, the broken body of a fallen soldier acts as a silent rebuttal to allegations of cowardice, and it hints at the horrors of war, perhaps more effectively

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[41]Nicolleta Gullace, "White Feathers and Wounded Men: Female Patriotism and the Memory of the Great War" *The Journal of British Studies* Vol. 36 No. 2, (April 1997) pg. 178-206, 189.
[42] Ibid., 186.
[43] Ibid.,199.
[44] Ibid., 202.

than words and language.[45] While Gullace does not address the convalescent blues in her article, Jeffrey Reznick asserts that the hospital uniform was readily identifiable by the British public. In this manner the convalescent blues dovetails nicely with the perception surrounding the khaki uniform, in that the khaki uniform symbolized bravery and a willingness to serve, and the convalescent blues represented serving with distinction. Men wearing khaki were seen as heroes, and that positive regard towards those men who had already worn their khaki uniform and suffered a debilitating wound.[46]

While the "convalescent blues" may have fended off accusations of cowardice or shirking responsibility in times of national crisis, the wounded men who were actually wearing them generally viewed the uniform negatively. Made typically out of flannel and only in a few mass-produced sizes, they generally did not fit men very well, frequently forcing the men to roll up the pant legs and shirt sleeves.[47] Many of the soldiers found the ill fitting uniforms to be ridiculous-looking. The uniforms also did not have any pockets. For the men wearing these uniforms the lack of pockets was more than just a nuisance. The British government did not include pockets on the uniforms because they were trying to skimp on fabric, and since the men were not allowed to have money on their person while in the hospital anyway, it seemed like an unnecessary addition to the uniform. Reznick asserts the lack of pockets upset the men wearing them because in this historical moment, all men's suits had pockets for carrying money, tickets, and other small personal belongings. However, women's clothing typically had no pockets at all,

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[45] Ibid., 202.
[46] Jeffrey Reznick, *Healing the Nation:Soldiers and the Culture of Caregiving in Britain during the Great War (*Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 111.
[47] Ibid., 108.

because they typically carried their things in a purse.[48] Thus, for these wounded men a uniform without pockets may have had an unintended, feminizing message.

The wounded men's inability to carry their belongings with them while wearing the convalescent blues further emasculated them by refusing to acknowledge the connection between masculinity and the ability to own property. The ability to earn money and buy things in this moment was predominantly a masculine trait, and those men who were unable to fulfill this role were not regarded as real men. A key attribute of a man was the ability to successfully support himself and his dependants. A visible manifestation of this intangible trait was possessions. Thus the hospital uniforms for wounded men inadvertently separated wounded men from the items they possessed which would demonstrate to those around them that they were capable earners, and therefore "real" men. While having a pocket on the uniform may have been seen as a frivolous, unnecessarily addition by the British Government, for the wounded men themselves the pocket was a symbol of manhood.

The men in both figures are pictured wearing hospital uniforms, which implies they are all still patients and have not finished treatment for their wounds. Since these men are wearing hospital uniforms they are clearly not officers and most likely come from the middle or working classes. Officers were generally exempt from wearing the convalescent blues, being allowed to wear their personal clothes with an armband that marked them as wounded. Silk pajamas were also allowed for officers.[49] In Figure 3, while the shirts appear loosely cut and baggy on these men, only a few of the men have

[48] Ibid., 108.
[49] Ibid., 101.

had to roll up the sleeves on their jackets. The pant leg length, for these men at least, is not much of an issue. Clearly evident on all of the seven men's jackets are nonregulation pockets that have been sewn on the upper right side of these men's jackets. The pockets vary in size, color, and placement on these otherwise standardized uniforms, suggesting they were added on after the uniform had been completed. This implies that these soldiers may have resented the feminine message that went along with their pocketless uniforms and did something about it. It also suggests that these men were not new admissions to the hospital, and had been at Roehampton long enough to become annoyed with their uniforms, and found the extra material and the time to do something about it. The addition of a pocket could be interpreted as a sign that these men considered themselves men and wanted their clothing to express that. If the British government is to be believed, the pocket was not needed to address a practical concern of holding money or other small valuables.

The second half of the intended message is a celebration of these men, and holding them up as a symbol for the British national spirit. The men in this photo are depicted as strong and independent; they are presented locking arms with each other in a demonstration of mateship, not relying on an able-bodied individual, who is not even present in the image. Their calm smiles imply a sense of confidence and acceptance that typify the beloved British trait of a "stiff upper lip." Their direct eye contact with the viewer challenge him or her to respond in the same manner. Being positioned outdoors (in this case, in the gardens outside the Roehampton Hospital) and not enclosed inside the hospital or by a hospital bed implies they are still vigorous men who do not need or desire to be coddled or taken care of. The green landscape surrounding these men is

reminiscent of British landscape paintings of decades past. The outdoors setting also echoes earlier portrait conventions, and presents the wounded men similar to a lord in his landed estate. In this way the setting is used to convey an empowering message to men whose injuries have stripped them of their former independence. The photographer wants the viewer to understand that these are manly men who do not want sympathy or caretaking, because they have somehow become more of a man through their suffering, not less.[50] The overall normality of the photograph, with the exception of the clearly evident life-changing injuries, suggests that these men have accepted their sacrifice and do not pity themselves. Apparently able to move past their injuries and continue their lives suggests that the men in the photo have overcome serious adversity, and it offers hope that British society will be able to do the same.

In these carefully choreographed images of physically disabled men, the presentation of masculinity is a key component of the story. The concept of British manliness was an integral part of the rhetoric surrounding British military recruitment and involvement in the Great War.[51] Recruitment rhetoric linking masculinity and military service is echoed in these images.

Yet somewhat at odds with this intended reading is the staged quality of the image. The top row of men are balanced somewhat precariously on the arms of the other mens' wheelchairs. This unusual arrangement, which may remind contemporary readers of a pyramid of cheerleaders, would have been very difficult, if not impossible, for these disabled men to create by themselves. They almost certainly needed the assistance of

[50] Joanna Bourke, *Dismembering the Male:Men's Bodies, Britain, and the Great War* (London: Reaktion Books, 1996), 58.
[51] Nicolleta Gullace, "White Feathers and Wounded Men: Female Patriotism and the Memory of the Great War" *The Journal of British Studies* Vol. 36 No. 2, (April 1997) pg. 178-206.

able-bodied individuals to create this carefully-choreographed position. The very purpose of this image also conflicts with the message of the wounded men as being more masculine for enduring a debilitating injury. Its unusual location within the IWM archive, in the IWM's Women's Box Collection, underlines the conflicted message. The Women's Box collection is composed of seven other images, all of which depict women at work in employment that aids the war effort, like nurses and munitions workers. According to Jane Rosen, a curator in the IWM archives, this image of wounded men belongs in this women-centered collection because these men were cared for by female nurses.[52] Thus, their healthy and well-manicured appearance could well have been the result of women's labor. This may have been something that the wounded soldiers' society saw in these photographs. The careful attention to these men's appearance could have been understood by the wounded soldiers' contemporaries as a visible sign of a woman's touch. The nurturing care these men received is evident in these photographs, and in a historical moment where a huge part of the male workforce was engaged with the war effort, it would have been clear that the caretakers of these men would be women. However, the women's narrative is subtle here, and remains secondary to the wounded men. Yet the connection between wounded men and the women who helped them is carefully hidden in this contemporary image.

This image was likely created to be disseminated in the form of a postcard or a fundraising souvenir for Roehampton Hosptial. Roehampton, and other specialized facilities like it, were funded with private charitable donations. [53] This image was almost certainly linked to fundraising efforts to care for men who were so badly wounded in the

[52] Personal correspondence (email) from Jane Rosen from the Imperial War Musuem, 4/29/2009.
[53] Deborah Cohen, *The War Come Home* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001) 5.

war that they were unable to support themselves and needed to rely on charitable gifts to survive. In this point in history, one of the key traits of masculinity was a man's ability to work and financially support himself and his family.[54] Thus, the irony of this image is that it was carefully managed to present these wounded men as literally pillars of masculinity, yet this image was used to drum up financial support for these same men who lacked the masculine ability to provide for themselves.

With this special financial relationship between the disabled veterans and the British public in mind, the photographs of disabled men were intended to carry a clear political message. Presenting images of the physically disabled as manly, courageous heroes instead of pandering to previously-held ideas about the physically disabled being pitiful and helpless may have been an important tool in opening British hearts and wallets. In this context, depicting dismemberment not as a final, depressing result of combat, but as a journey back to established patterns of masculinity may have been a particularly resonant message to a public still reeling from the true cost of the First World War.

But even this image of masculinity poses the risk of an alternative, less reassuring, reading. While the stumps of missing legs have been sanitized for the viewer by being carefully tucked away under an empty pant leg, their absence hints at the catastrophic moment in combat when limb was ruthlessly ripped from body. The relatively large number of wounded men in this image, seven, adds to this photograph's haunting quality. By grouping so many men together, who all suffer from the same

[54]Seth Koven, "Remembering and Dismemberment: Crippled Children, Wounded Soldiers and The Great War in Great Britain," *American Historical Review* (Oct. 1994) 1172.

dismembering wounds, this photo is more shocking than those that depict just one or two individuals. The group nature of this photograph silently attests to the destructive ability of the Great War's weapons: tools that dismembered not just dozens of men, but an entire generation. In these ways this image is able to portray several key points about the Great War without employing grisly or disturbing images. Perhaps this explains why text book editors, when choosing just one image to illustrate the First World War, settle on this one.[55]

The heart of the alternative reading lies in focusing on the dismemberment itself, a horrifying message, which had the potential to be used it as pacifistic ammunition against the present conflict and war in general as a solution to a nation's problems. While there is no evidence that this happened in Great Britain, images of war disabled men were used in this manner in France and Germany in the postwar years.[56]

A similar image, Figure 4, again depicts disabled individuals standing alone, without the aid of able-bodied helpers, in an outdoor setting (in this case on the lawns of the London General Hospital).[57] The smiles on the men's faces are luminous, and the one legged man touches his hat's brim in a polite greeting. This image seems to capture a moment of two men pleasantly interrupted from conversation by the arrival of a close friend. The direct eye contact extended by both men, and the doffed hat in greeting interact directly with the viewer, seeming to imply that you, the viewer, are the person the

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[55] Including the high school textbook I once taught from*, World Cultures: A Global Mosaic* (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 2004.)

[56] See Ernst Friedrich's *War Against War* (Newburyport: Journeyman Press, 1987) and Amy Lyman's article "The Aesthetics of Dismemberment: Surrealism and the Musée du Val-de-Grâce in 1917" *Cultural Critique.*46 (2000): 45-79.

[57] The Imperial War Museum Website: www.iwmcollections.org.uk, April 23rd 2009.

wounded soldiers are so delighted to see. While no date is specified, the IWM archives do mention that this is an official photograph created by G.P. Lewis, a Ministry of Information official photographer. The intention of Lewis is clearly to display the pluckiness and bravery of the typical British man, even those who have obviously suffered tremendously, as evidenced by the original caption of this photograph, "Are we downhearted?" The rhetorical question accompanying the luminous grins, and the missing limbs, is intended to cultivate in the viewer a sense of admiration for these wounded men. It highlights the courage of the wounded men, leading the viewer to assume this same trait displayed on the battlefield is what caused these men their wounds, and landed them in wheelchairs and on crutches.

This image that openly displays deformities, however, like Figure 3, does not seem to be intended to elicit pity from the viewer. These men are well groomed and are portrayed as in charge of their own bodies, maintaining a forceful, purposeful presence around them. They, like the men in Figure 3, are wearing the "convalescent blues." In this image the ill-fitting nature of the convalescent blues is more clearly evident, in the loose, baggy overcoats and the pants that are too short on the figure to the left. However, these men have not sewn a pocket on their uniforms as the men in Figure 3 did. Even though their bodies have been damaged, their spirits, and perhaps by extension, their masculinity, remain intact. Thus, the message of this official photograph is to "spin" the tragic tale of death and deformity that was common in the Great War into a triumphal narrative of the strength of the British martial spirit.[58]

[58] Heather Street, *Martial Races: the Military, Race, and Masculinity in the British Empire, 1857-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004).

While Figures 3 and 4 are arguably more empowering to the disabled veterans of the Great War, these images also lend themselves to a more cynical interpretation. Even though these men are portrayed with self-composure and dignity, it is also evident that this more positive representation also fit the narrative the British Government wanted to tell its public. These images are undeniably manipulated to tell an inspiring narrative centered on the triumph of British masculinity. The story they tell is a nice extension of the war-era recruiting narrative, and seems to celebrate these men's sacrifice in a way that downplays the actual trauma and difficulties these newly-disabled men would surely have faced. Arguably, this story of masculine triumph did not reflect the realities of the new life these disabled men found themselves in, a life that revolved around pitifully small pensions and even more pitiful work opportunities.[59] In this manner, it could be argued that even these comparatively flattering images support the narrative of the government who sent these wounded men to their dismemberment in the first place.

Physically Wounded Men on the Road to Recovery

What is intriguing about both of these images is that they can both be categorized as portraits, rather than the action shots, like Figure 5, which depicts wounded men learning to walk again on prosthetic legs. Even though the subjects are in the same group as the previous two images, the message of this photograph differs. The side angle of the men makes it difficult for the viewer to pick up on visual clues of their class, and even their facial expressions. The subject's lack of eye contact with the viewer implies they are

[59] Deborah Cohen, *The War Come Home* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 103.

Figure 5, *Learning to Walk on Artificial Legs*

By Permission of the Imperial War Museum. Q 33693.

too busy with the task of learning to walk again to engage the viewer, leaving him or her feeling that they are observing the narrative unfolding before them, and are not necessarily part of it. This image leaves the viewer feeling somewhat voyeuristic, because these men are not wearing any pants. This lack of full attire, and therefore the compromised dignity of these men leaves the viewer feeling disquieted, as if viewing these men during a private moment where they should be left alone.

The intent of Figure 5 is to show that wounded men are receiving the bodily reconstruction they need to become men again. While this image lacks the polish and deliberate positioning of the portraits that were discussed earlier, these pictures also have

a comforting narrative for the British public. Figure 5 presents the wounded men going about the business of learning how to walk again and present a narrative of regeneration. The intended message to the viewer is that British medicine will heal those that the war tore apart and will make the lame walk. Displaying the healing process of disabled soldiers mirrored the French decision to present to its public the medical journey to wholeness.[60]

Similarly, Figure 6 depicts a soldier having a plaster cast made of the stump of his leg in preparation for an artificial leg. This is an official photograph, yet it does not display the same disquieting effect on the viewer as Figure 5. One explanation may be his attire: while the soldier's stump is visible almost up to his hip, his other leg is covered, a long shirt shields his private areas from the viewer's eyes, and he is wearing a button-up shirt and tie. He does not make eye contact with the viewer, which makes his expression more difficult to read, but his crossed arms and relaxed posture suggests a routine, unexciting task, perhaps even boredom. The intended message, like the previous Figure 5, is to depict the healing process for wounded soldiers. This image, too, could be considered a comforting narrative for the British public, since this soldier is able to get the prosthetic which will enable him to lead a more or less normal life. Imbedded in this narrative is the message that it is the state that is making men whole again. Giving dismembered men prostheses, and teaching them to use them, creates a more positive narrative that places the British government in the role of a healer, not a destroyer. These images could be used as an effective rebuttal to allegations that the state is the source of the dismemberment by sending young men off to war in the first place. Seth Koven

[60] Amy Lyford, "The Aesthetics of Dismemberment: Surrealism and the Musee Val-de-Grace in 1917" *Cultural Critique* Vol. 46 (Autumn 2000), 45-79, 46.

Figure 6 *Hospital Treatment for Servicemen During the First World War*

By Permission of The Imperial War Museum. Q 33684

asserts the British government found themselves quickly overwhelmed with the enormous numbers of casualties and turned to unusual methods to treat them all. One move was to place disabled soldiers in hospitals that had been developed to treat crippled children. The same orthopedic treatments that had been pioneered to treat crippled children were applied to wounded soldiers, as were other treatment regimens, such as work prescriptions.[61] While work prescriptions were intended to address the mental and spiritual components of disability as well as strengthening broken bodies and facilitating healing, they also provided the patient with some sort of skill that would enable them to make a living.

Behind the similarities of the treatments of wounded soldiers and crippled children is the notion that the state is responsible for the healing. With crippled children, the state cannot be held directly responsible for their disabled status as with wounded soldiers, but the state still had a direct interest in healing these children. By treating these children's disabilities and giving them training in job related skills, the British government was hoping to prevent a life-long dependency on the state.[62] Ironically, numerous crippled children who had been successfully rehabilitated by the state were deemed healthy enough to be drafted, and they fought and died for the state that healed them.[63] This concept of the government taking care of its fallen men, just as it had for disabled children, would be a comforting thought for the British public.

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[61] Seth Koven, "Remembering and Dismemberment: Crippled Children, Wounded Soldiers and The Great War in Great Britain," *American Historical Review* (Oct. 1994) 1180.
[62] Ibid., 1175.
[63] Ibid., 1184.

Shell Shocked Men

However, images of the mentally wounded are not as easily used to create a narrative of bravery or regeneration. The difficulty of creating a positive narrative around these men, who were potentially as incapacitated by their mental wounds as the physically wounded, may stem from the lack of awareness of this comparatively new malady. Shell shock presented with a wide array of symptoms, varying from chronic muscular movements, nightmares, amnesia, to complete psychotic breaks. Since psychology was still in its infancy at the outbreak of the First World War, the reasons behind mental illness were not fully understood and several different theories explaining mental illness were developed and used to try to treat this baffling disorder. British psychologists during the Great War were divided on the causes of shell shock and the British government never formally adopted one official strategy for treating it. Edgar Jones describes two of the assumptions held by the heads of Maghull and the Maudsley, (hospitals chartered for the treatment of war-related mental illness) and how the assumed causes of shell shock determined the appropriate treatments for it. Fredrick Mott, the main force behind the Maudsley hospital, believed that shell shock had an organic origin. Mott asserted that shell shock was not a psychological disorder, but a physical malady caused by trauma to the central nervous system, by the force of an artillery explosion or even by poison gases.[64] The leading doctors at Maghull, on the other hand, discounted Mott's hypothesis and instead leaned toward a more purely psychological explanation for shell shock. They asserted that a terrifying episode, such as a fierce artillery

[64] Edgar Jones, "Shell Shock at Maghull and the Maudsley: Models of Psychological Medicine in the UK," *The Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* (Vol. 65) No.3, pg. 380.

bombardment, or even a gruesome death of a friend, could trigger a traumatic neurosis, particularly in those with a nervous disposition or previously repressed traumas.[65]

Neither of these theories favored by British doctors concurred with the eugenicist assumptions prevalent in other parts of Europe at the time. German schools of psychiatry in particular assumed mental illness to have primarily genetic roots. Insanity was considered to be one of many undesirable but inheritable traits, and thus the foundation of mental illness was deemed biological. Thus, the interplay between insanity and outside causes was understood differently by German psychiatrists. They believed the stress of warfare triggered a soldier's inborn state of madness that had lain dormant within his psychology. The neurotic soldier's psychological makeup made him genetically susceptible to mental breakdown in a way that other soldiers perhaps were not. Thus, once symptoms were under control, German war neurotics were not returned to the front to continue the war. For them, the war was over, and they finished the conflict working some other job that contributed to the war effort, like in a munitions factory, since they were determined to be eugenically unfit for combat.[66]

Since the intended cures of shell shock were tailored to address what was believed to be the underlying cause of the disorder, the treatment regimens favored at British hospitals differed. The Maudsley favored warm baths and massage, which were believed to assist the central nervous system in healing. The doctors at Maghull favored using the "talking cure" approach, while Mott at the Maudsley unsurprisingly believed

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[65] Ibid., 382.
[66] Paul Lerner, *Hysterical Men: War, Psychiatry, and the Politics of Trauma in Germany, 1890-1930* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), 4.

hypnosis and psychoanalysis were unnecessary.[67] Although each hospital held its own hypothesis for the cause of shell shock, that is not to suggest that each completely rejected the other's theories or the treatments utilized. There was a large degree of overlap between these two facilities. But agreeing on what a cured patient might look like was a difficulty faced by both Maghull and the Maudsley. To the civilian doctors, a shell shocked patient could be considered recovered if he was able to be discharged from psychiatric care and resume some form of civilian work. However, the army doctors defined a recovery from shell shock more stringently, and a full cure to them was a patient who was discharged fit for duty.[68] This mirrors the concept that the only crippled children who were fully cured were those who were capable of fighting in the Great War.[69]

Under these definitions of cure, images of those suffering lasting mental injuries from the war are rare indeed. Looking at Figure 7 (*Patient Suffering from War Neurosis, Shell Shock)* it becomes clear why British officials would not have wanted the British public to have access to images of men suffering from shell shock. The soldier depicted in this image is obviously disheveled, with his hair in disarray, and lacking the carefully combed, slicked down appearance of the physically wounded men discussed earlier. The image is grainy, and while he does appear to be clean-shaven, it is not clear if he is wearing a shirt or not. It is evident that he is not wearing the type of clothing worn by the physically wounded men, like the convalescent blues uniform. The bare, unadorned

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[67] Edgar Jones, "Shell Shock at Maghull and the Maudsley: Models of Psychological Medicine in the UK", *The Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* (Vol. 65) No.3, pg. 388.
[68] Ibid., 390.
[69] Seth Koven, "Remembering and Dismemberment: Crippled Children, Wounded Soldiers and The Great War in Great Britain," *American Historical Review* (Oct. 1994) 1180.

Figure 7 *War Neuroses and Shell Shock*

walls behind him suggest an institution of some sort, although no details of where the photograph was taken were available.

Obviously, the most salient aspect of this image is the expression on the soldier's face. The facial expression depicts a man who is still consumed by his terrifying experiences from combat, experiences which in his own mind have followed him back home. The gaping mouth and distant, unfocused gaze imply that his thoughts and focus are still at the front. The man's bulging eyes lead the viewer to assume that his mental

illness is so severe that it has a physical manifestation, also. The frontal shot suggests a medical photograph, and offers a nod to physiognomy, or the belief that certain facial features were an outward manifestation of character traits.[70] These images also suggest a similarity to the photographs of Dr. Hugh Diamond, whose photographs of the insane attempted to document their inner turmoil through photographing their faces.[71] By presenting this shell shocked soldier in a rather unflattering, harsh frontal angle, it gives the viewer the ability to appraise the bone structure that made up his face, and come to their own conclusions about what type of fellow this man was.

The audience for this image, along with the intended message, are different from the images earlier discussed. This image was intended for medical professionals to learn more about this new mental disorder that sprang out of the trenches. The grainy, poor quality of the image suggests it was not intended to be reproduced in widely circulated periodicals. An image created for medical professionals would focus more on the symptoms, which are evident in this image, with other aesthetic factors, or concerns about portraying this soldier with dignity, falling to the wayside. In this way, the shell shocked soldier is represented first and foremost as a specimen. The lack of attention to careful grooming or a more aesthetic setting implies a faith that this image will be seen by a select few, and not those who might find his potentially unclothed state and obviously deranged mind unsettling.

Intriguingly, the physically disabled men are rarely, if ever, presented alone. But in all of the images of shell shocked soldiers they are solitary figures. The implications

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[70] Sharrona Pearl, *About Faces: Physignomy in Nineteenth-Century Great Britain* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 27.
[71] Ibid., 152.

of this singular representation are several. While it could reflect practical concerns about the difficulties of arranging several men together who suffer from a disease that may interfere with their mobility or have a negative impact on their ability to pose for the camera, the singularity also implies that mental illness is an isolating condition that leaves the afflicted cut off from human contact, even from the companionship of fellow sufferers. These shell shocked men are presented in a manner that deepens their isolation. While the physically disabled men in Figures 3 and 4 are presented as stoic, even cheerful about their fate, and the soldiers in Figures 5 through 6 are capable of participating in their own healing process, the mentally ill appear to lack all of these attributes. In this manner, not only are the mentally ill positioned alone, in an institutional setting, but as pathetic beings for whom it was difficult to hold sympathetic feelings. In this manner, they are cut off from each other and the viewer in a way the physically wounded are not.[72]

This argument is supported by Figure 8, which depicts a shell shocked soldier from the Royal Victoria Hospital at Netley. This image depicts a man who is clearly lacking the polish bestowed on the aforementioned physically disabled men, as evidenced by his disheveled hair and almost complete lack of clothing. It seems an accurate assumption that the uniform for patients at Netley was not a piece of fabric tied as some sort of loincloth, so this choice of attire on behalf of the patient implies a rejection of British social norms in favor of something more primitive. Snapping a photograph of this soldier in a scantily clad moment could be a nod to a eugenicist presentation, although this image is lacking the front and profile angle, which seems to make this orientation

[72] Michael Norden, *The Cinema of Isolation: A History of Physical Disability in the Movies (*New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1994.)

Figure 8 *War Neurosis, 1917*

unlikely. Presenting the full body for the camera is also a convention of medical photography, and this suggests that the photographer may have intended to display this soldier's body to the viewer so the viewer may search the body for a root of his shell shock symptoms. Once again, this soldier is being presented as a specimen, in a manner that the physically wounded men were not.

The shocked soldier's gaze is not on the camera, apparently focusing on an area of the floor directly in front of him. In fact, this soldier appears completely unaware of the photographer's presence at all, with his attention focused intently on something the photographer, and by extension the viewer, cannot recognize. By not acknowledging the viewer with his gaze, the picture gives the viewer the impression that this man is

completely lost in his own world, perhaps still preoccupied with the sights and sounds he left hundreds of miles away at the front. Coupled with his lack of clothing and his bizarre, unnatural stance, his intent stare at nothing leaves the viewer with the impression that this man is truly mad. This photograph completely lacks the manipulated appearance of the physically wounded soldiers in figures four and five. While those images were carefully centered, with the subjects all oriented towards the camera, Figure 9's subject is to the viewer's far left, leaving the photograph unbalanced. This arrangement suggests the subject had suddenly gotten up and intended to leave the area, and the photographer had to hastily snap a photograph before the subject got away completely.

Since this mentally-ill soldier's depiction leads the viewer to question his grip on reality, it is clear that he does not understand that his picture is being taken, and that even if he was aware of the photographer, he did not understand or care about the purpose of the image being made of him. One questions the mentally-ill soldier's ability to strike a pose for the camera and in the process present a more flattering image of himself for posterity. This portrayal of the shell shocked soldier may be related to his residence at Netley, which was generally reserved for the mentally ill soldiers that presented with the more severe psychotic symptoms, which made them too demanding for placement in other war mental hospitals.[73] Thus, this soldier may be presented as a typically difficult patient to supervise and care for. In this manner, the photograph could be used to justify the need for specialized hospitals like Netley.

[73]Edgar Jones, "Shell Shock at Maghull and the Maudsley: Models of Psychological Medicine in the UK," *The Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* (Vol. 65) No.3, pg. 379.

The shell shocked soldier in Figure 8 is also presented as a more feminine individual than the physically disabled individuals of the same war. He is presented in an indoor setting that is clearly a mental institution, as evidenced by the barren walls and standardized-looking bed pushed up against the wall. Unlike the physically wounded men of Figures 3 and 4, who are depicted as independent men who belong in an outdoor setting, this soldier clearly needs to be taken care of. He appears helpless because he is not in control of himself. While the men in Figure 3 appear well-balanced on the arms of wheelchairs, this mentally ill soldier's awkward stance and small footsteps make him appear to struggle with the simple task of staying balanced in an upright position. This stance suggests this man is suffering from some sort of neurological disorder which was impairing this soldier's ability to control his limbs. Even his stance, with his chest arched forward and behind stuck out behind him appears somewhat feminine, comparing to the confident, relaxed, shoulders-back posture of the wounded men in Figure 3. Struggling to stay balanced and upright on two legs, the basic attribute of being human, this soldier also appears to blur the lines between man and beast. Not only is this soldier's masculinity being questioned in this photograph, but also his humanity. Taken together, the indoor setting and feminine position of this soldier contributes to the impression that the mentally ill man is a weak, dependant, feminized person whose inability to care for himself has led to his placement in the domestic sphere.

Figure 9, "Chronic Movements Due to Shell Shock," was pulled from two albums from the King George V Military Hospital, although the albums specialized in plastic surgery cases. Perhaps this was one photo in a series, or even a still from a motion picture, since one image obviously does not convey a sense of movement, chronic or

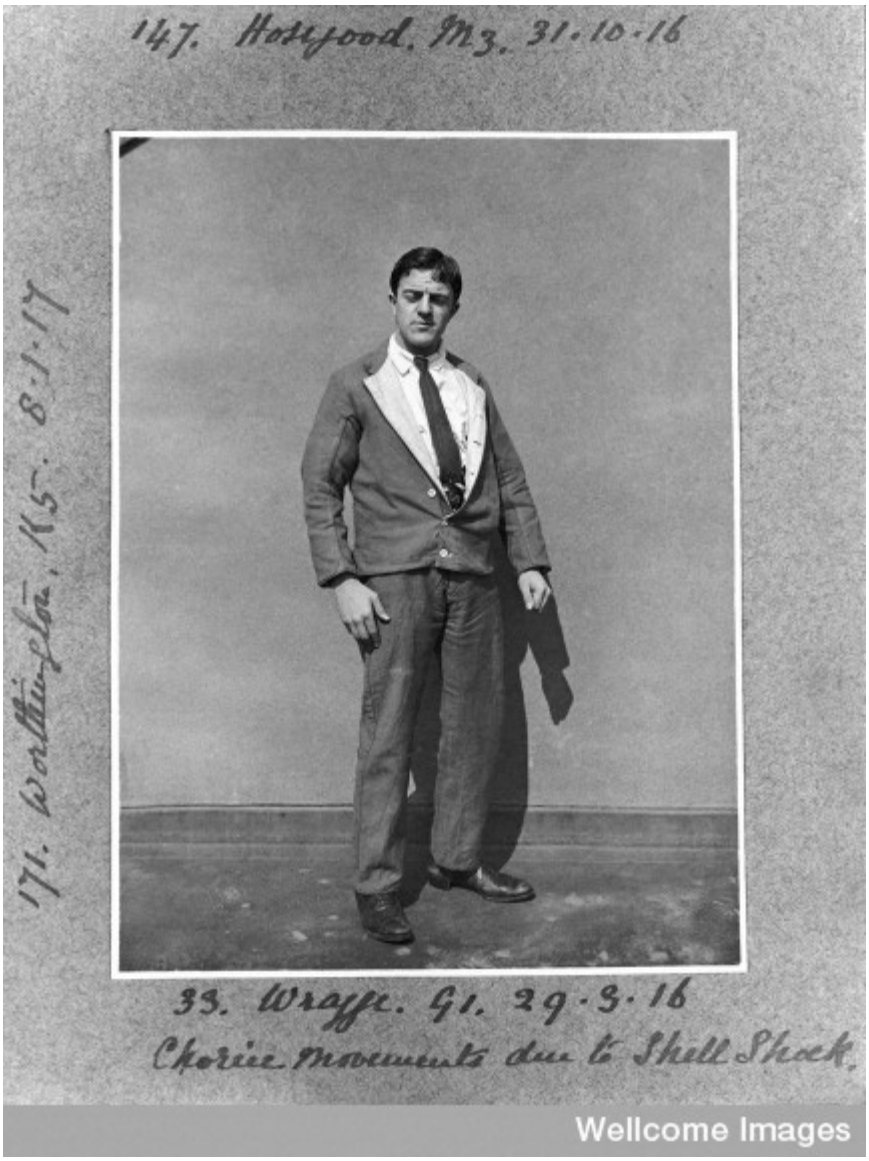

Figure 9, *Chronic Movements Due to Shell Shock*

otherwise. While the subject of this photo is better groomed than the previous shell shocked individual, as evidenced by his full attire in convalescent blues, he still is clearly not well kempt. The uniform he is wearing is coming unbuttoned, and is so wrinkled it appears he slept in it. The convalescent blues this soldier is wearing do not seem to fit him well, tying into the common complaint among the physically wounded. However, this soldier's uniform seems to lack the extra attention needed to make it look presentable, as the physically wounded men did. This suggests the mentally wounded man was not given advance notice that his picture would be taken, or that he knew his illness would be the subject of the photograph, and not him as a person. The chronic ticks the photographer was trying to convey are not evident, but his awkward stance and closed-eyed, pained expression articulate a man uncomfortable in his own body. As in Figure 8, the bare walls and indoor setting imply a mental institution. The intended audience for this type of image is restricted to medical personnel, who were interested in the symptoms displayed by this individual.

Figure 10, a photo series from War Neurosis and Shell Shock (a handbook on war induced mental illness published in 1919) acts as an interesting foil for the other images. Taken in 1917 at Maudsley Hospital, these photographs document this soldier's path to partial recovery. The first image (number 31) shows the patient when he is first accepted to Maudsley in early 1917. Unlike the other photographs of shell shocked soldiers, this man is depicted fully clothed. However, his posture conveys a sense of helplessness that is just as palpable with this individual as the other, less clothed patients. He, too, is unable to match the viewer's gaze. Mental illness may not have robbed this patient of the ability to recognize his surroundings and reality, but has rather stolen his control over his

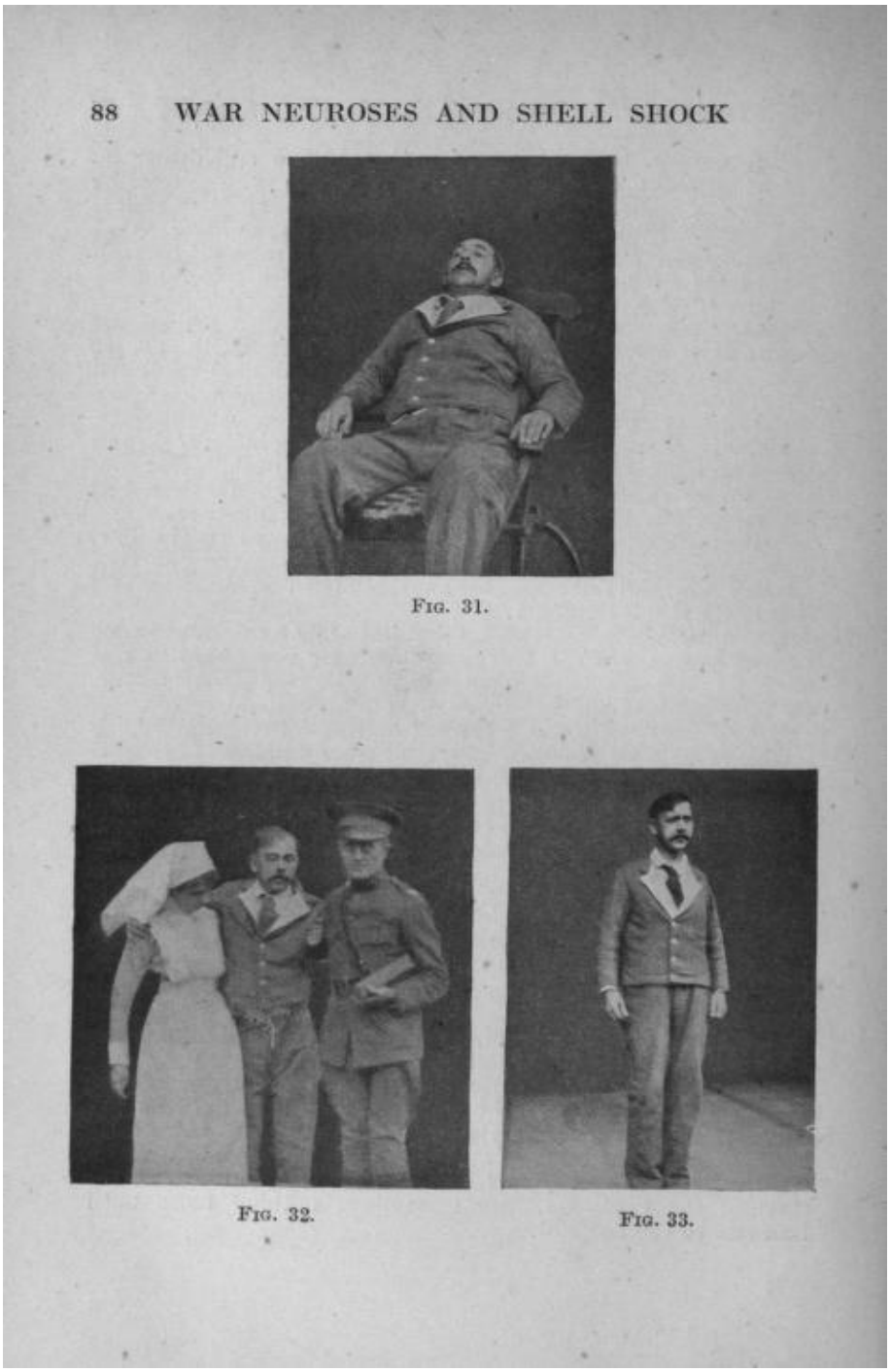

Figure 10 *War Neuroses and Shell Shock*

The University of California Digital Library. In the public domain.

own body. No muscle tone is evident in this man as he lies limply in his wheel chair. His hands lie loosely on the arms of his chair, and the backward lean of his wheelchair implies that he lacks the muscular strength to even hold himself in a sitting position. This soldier is also heavy compared to the other shell shocked soldiers, an appearance that is perhaps exaggerated by his ill fitting set of convalescent blues. This presentation suggests that the doctor in charge of his care was attempting to document what they interpreted as neurological trauma, which has impaired this man's ability to move. Thus, this image could be an attempt to document a soldier's symptoms to bolster an organic, not psychological root of shell shock. Even though this man's mental illness manifests itself as a physical malady, cues from the photograph make clear to the viewer that the true nature of this man's wounds are not physical, but mental. The blank background implies an institutional setting, which stands in sharp contrast to the lush gardens or rehabilitation hospitals that figure prominently in the photographs of the physically wounded men.

The second image on the page (number 32) offers equally intriguing insights into the attitudes held at the time about mentally ill men through what is shown and what is hidden. Figure 3 is stored in the women's history section of the Imperial War Museum's archive, because the carefully groomed appearance was the end product of the hard work of women. However, the women themselves are not visible. Presenting the women would have detracted from the image's message of the preserved masculinity of physically wounded soldiers. The female nurse in Figure 10, however, is not only present in the image, but is also helping to physically hold him up. This representation of the shell shocked soldier and the relationship he has with the female nurse contrasts with how men were supposed to behave in British society in the early twentieth century.

Victorian concepts of masculinity (which still held sway in post-Edwardian Britain) dictated that the men were to be the independent breadwinners who supported their women, not the other way around. This representation of the shell shocked soldier leaning on the nurse suggests his mental injury has made him womanly, too, a reading that was carefully avoided in the photographs of the physically wounded men. The patient's eyes are still averted, as is the gaze of the nurse, who is focused on her unsteady patient. This stands in contrast to the other gentleman in the photograph. Clearly not mentally ill, the other man not only is able to stand up straight on his own, but his powerful gaze meets the camera. Ironically, the mentally wounded men in this image and the other photographs of the mentally ill are presented as unbalanced and unable to move without assistance. Yet the men who are missing their legs are presented as solid and balanced, even when on crutches or posing on the arms of wheelchairs. In this way, mental illness is presented as a physical weakness that can be seen through the lens of the camera. Likewise, the steady character and manly resolve that led the physically wounded men to their fate is also presented through their body positioning for the camera.

The final figure in this series depicts the patient as more or less "cured," or at least well enough to be discharged. Even though this soldier has healed enough to be released back into society, he still lacks the vigorous presence that has been cultivated in the photographs of the physically wounded soldiers. The background of the healed soldier is still the bland background of the mental institution, suggesting he still is set apart from the rest of society. Even though the presentation of this man is similar to the physically disabled men (he is carefully centered in the photograph, almost his whole

body except for his shoes is visible), this soldier seems more pitiful than inspiring. He does not look robust and healthy. This soldier has clearly lost a significant amount of weight compared to the photograph taken of him on admission. While his gaze is slightly averted to the left of the camera, a photographic convention seen in several of the physically wounded men as well, this soldier's expression looks pinched, almost pained, like a man under tremendous stress. His slumping shoulders add to the impression of a defeated man who continues to carry the burden of the war with him. Even though he is now standing on his own two feet, this soldier still seems off balance, and he appears to lean away from the camera. Although this soldier has been cured of his mental illness, he is still presented wearing the convalescent blues uniform, the clothing worn by men who are still sick or injured. In stark comparison to the physically wounded men, this soldier's uniform is somewhat in disarray. His tie is clumsily knotted and hanging crookedly.

The goal of many British doctors was to heal the men of their hysteria completely and return them to the trenches. This suggests that the British believed the root cause of shell shock lay not in the biology of their troops, but in some factor outside of the men, such as the horrendous conditions of the trenches. The theories of prominent doctors such as W. H. Rivers explain shell shock as the resulting mental break down resulting from the drive for self-preservation being pitted against the military's expectation for self-sacrifice.[74] While this explanation for the roots of shell shock may demonstrate morecompassion for the soldier's plight than their German contemporaries, these theories still do not encompass all the beliefs and attitudes held by British society at the time.

[74] W. H. Rivers, *The Repression of War Experience,* net.lib.byu.edu/estu/wwi/comment/**rivers**.htm, accessed 5/12/2011.

CONCLUSION

The overwhelming numbers of men who suffered from shell shock would suggest that statistically images of shell shocked men should be more representative of the typical soldier's experience than the images that fill the Imperial War Museum's archives. An estimated 200,000 men were discharged from the British Army because their mental illnesses made them unable to execute their soldierly duties.[75] Yet the few photographs of shell shocked men which are still preserved were not widely circulated because they were unable to accommodate the triumphal narrative that most people in Britain felt comfortable with or wanted to hear about. Wounded men are still men, even if they lack an arm or leg. Their courage was not injured; indeed courage was what led many men to behave heroically and become injured. Courage in a different context allowed some men to accept their newly disabled status with stoicism and the expected stiff upper lip. There is no taint of uncontrolled emotions, considered a feminine trait, from a physical wound. Thus, physically wounded men could be, and were, displayed as a source of pride. In fact, it was not uncommon for wounded men to be displayed in parades as a way to shame those whole-bodied men in the crowds into volunteering to fight.[76] With these attitudes in mind, it stands to reason that photographs of amputatees became a mass-

[75]Peter Leese, *Shell Shock* (New York: Palgraves Macmillan, 2002), 10.
[76] Joanna Bourke, *Dismembering the Male:Men's Bodies, Britain, and the Great War* (London: Reaktion Books, 1996), 56.

produced fund raising tool that in many ways came to represent all the assumptions about masculinity that the war had churned up.

But those men whose courage buckled under fire and whose sanity was shredded in the face of combat did not fit easily into this celebration of British masculinity. Shell shocked British men were deemed by the public they served as suffering from a profoundly unmanly disorder. The mentally ill soldiers, while not necessarily viewed as degenerate, were perceived to have been unable to overcome their inner emotional turmoil and in this manner proved themselves insufficient in the greatest masculine proving ground. As a result, shell shocked men were not celebrated or upheld as a fundamental part of the war effort. Their stories of suffering and pain did not contain the high drama and triumph that would make a public at war approve of their government's actions. A soldier's broken body could be an appropriate symbol for the traits that the British valued in war: strength, bravery, and stoicism. A broken mind however was synonymous with failure and cowardice.

In conclusion, the images of men with shell shock were not widely circulated because their mental wounds did not fit into the narrative of superior British masculinity. Instead, photographs of physically injured men whose bodies testified to their courage to raise funds for veterans and the public's morale. A true man, common logic asserted, was logical, rational, and in full control of his emotions at all times, even during the trials of combat.[77] Thus, for a man to lose control of his emotions, and thus be unable to serve his country was tantamount to losing his claim to being a true man. Being unable to cope emotionally with the trauma of combat was something that reminded contemporary

[77] Ibid., 13.

Britons more of a hysterical woman. These sorts of images did not bolster the rhetoric of superior British masculinity that was most comforting to the public during the Great War. Thus, the British official photographers turned the camera's lens away from these men, instead holding up as an example the men whose minds, at least, were whole, even if their bravery ensured their bodies were not. Wounded men whose well-kept appearance and toothy smiles were preserved for posterity continue to adorn our textbooks, silently testifying to the pain and trauma of war, and remain symbols of the effect of industrial warfare on the male body in a way that other victims of the war could not.

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