

Un homme, un vrai: Martial and Alternative Masculinities in French War Literature and
Film

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Introduction

What does it mean to “be a man”—in the French articulation, to be *un homme, un vrai*, or as Elisabeth Badinter puts it in the imperative, “Sois un homme?”¹ Furthermore, what are the stakes of fulfilling or not fulfilling that command—and it *is* a command—“be a man”? In recent years, particularly after the 2008 start to the recession, the American media has discussed a “crisis of masculinity” and how rather than being in a recession, we were in a “mancession” since the jobs that were lost were primarily held by men.² This expression—crisis of masculinity—was familiar to me from the ways in which historians talk about the period in Europe around World War I and through World War II. Gerald N. Izenberg, a psychoanalyst and historian specializing in identity formation, describes the period from the end of the 19th-Century leading up to World War I as one in which, “European countries had taken up the warrior ideal with renewed vigor”³ while “observers concerned with the preservation and promotion of these virtues became increasingly anxious about the softening of masculinity.”⁴ This anxiety led to a sense of crisis within the image of the European male.

Margaret Higonnet, scholar of World War I literature and gender theory, discusses the state of masculinity after World War I. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), though it was not known as such at the time, “was understood by the military as a failure of masculinity—a failure of hardness, courage, or willpower—and a

¹ Elisabeth Badinter. *XY: de l'identité masculine*. Paris: Editions Odile Jacob, 1992, 13.

² Catherine Rampell. “The Mancession.” *New York Times* 10 August 2009. 29 April 2014.

<http://economix.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/08/10/the-mancection/?_php=true&_type=blogs&_r=0>.

³ Gerald N. Izenberg. *Modernism and Masculinity: Mann, Wedekind, Kandinsky Through World War I*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000, 9.

⁴ Izenberg 9

manifestation of latent effeminacy or immaturity.”⁵ Thus, the extreme violence of World War I fueled the already-present fear of men’s reduced masculine status. The cause of this crisis of masculinity in the early half of the 20th-Century was different from that of the 2008 recession, yet those wars disproportionately affected men’s physical and therefore economic stability. The rhetoric describing men’s status during the two periods is very similar—there was a “crisis of masculinity.”

Upon hearing this expression, I began to wonder: Why have I never heard of a “crisis of femininity?” Why does it seem that masculinity, by the very nature of it being in crisis, is more delicate and more tenuous than femininity? This is a contradiction that does not seem to make much sense given the common tropes of masculinity as “strong,” while simultaneously, this contradiction touches the very problem of gendered expectations, expectations that, for men especially, are at their height in times of war. While these expectations are pervasive, they do not necessarily lead to positive outcomes for smaller communities or for individuals. In this dissertation, I set out to explore the discrepancy between gender expectations that come out of State institutions, primarily the military, and the behavior of individuals under the authority of the State, in smaller communities. Through this study of literature and film, I examine the benefits and pitfalls of gender expectations, specifically masculinity, and as well as the rejection of these expectations.

To best interpret these expectations, a general understanding of the term “masculinity” is necessary. One articulation of this contradiction of what masculinity

⁵ Margaret R. Higonnet. "Authenticity and Art in Trauma Narratives of World War I." *Modernism/Modernity* 9.1 (2002): 91-107, 93.

means within the context of war that I especially appreciate comes from General Robert H. Borrow of the United States Marines. Genevieve Lloyd, philosopher and feminist, quotes General Borrow on whether to allow women in combat, something that would likely bring a feminine element into the situation and potentially alter, or even challenge, the masculine cultural history of combat and war:

‘War,’ he says, ‘is a man’s work. Biological convergences on the battlefield would not only be dissatisfying in terms of what women could do, but it would be an enormous psychological distraction for the male, who wants to think that he’s fighting for that woman somewhere behind, not up there in the same foxhole with him. It tramples the male ego.

When you get right down to it, you have to protect the manliness of war.’⁶

Borrow’s quotation suggests that, if the manliness of war needs protection, then these structures of masculinity put into place within the configuration of war as a part of the culture are not necessarily innate and, as such, are fragile. He also implies that the male ego has a significant stake in war—this ego desires being a hero specifically towards a woman, rather than a broader fight for the nation’s rights and citizens. This ego is what motivates the fight in war. If war helps men’s egos by allowing them to fight, then how does fighting—and even sometimes ultimately winning a war⁷—continue the crisis of masculinity, as we see through the wars of the first half of the 20th-Century?

⁶ Genevieve Lloyd. “Selfhood, War and Masculinity.” *Feminist Challenges: Social and Political Theory*. Ed. Carole Pateman and Elizabeth Gross. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1987. 63-76, 63-4.

⁷ As much as a war can really ever be “won,” though that is a different issue that would require an entirely different dissertation.

There has historically been a romanticization of war, and we can use literature to see the ways in which this sentimentality regarding such violence shifted in the last century. To begin an overview of the scholarship on war literature, I turn to Paul Fussell, literary scholar and World War II veteran. In his well-known work on the fiction on World War I, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, he describes the literary interpretation of war in its aftermath. From a literary study of war, Fussell concludes that

Every war is ironic because every war is worse than expected. Every war constitutes an irony of situation because its means are so melodramatically disproportionate to its presumed ends. In the Great War eight million people were destroyed because two persons, the Archduke Francis Ferdinand and his Consort, had been shot. The Second World War offers even more preposterous ironies. Ostensibly begun to guarantee the sovereignty of Poland, that war managed to bring about Poland's bondage and humiliation.⁸

He expands this conclusion specifically to the war his study focuses on, writing, "But the Great War was more ironic than any before or since. It was a hideous embarrassment to the prevailing Meliorist myth which had dominated the public consciousness for a century. It reversed the Idea of Progress."⁹ Thus while World War I was not the "war to end all wars," as it is frequently characterized, it was the war that ended the romanticization of wars. Fussell bases his historical extrapolations and interpretations on his readings of literary texts as well as on his own experience in World War II. Critics of

⁸ Paul Fussell. *The Great War and Modern Memory*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1975, 7-8.

⁹ Fussell 8

Fussell disagree with his assessment. Robin Prior and Trevor Wilson, both military historians, paraphrase Fussell's conclusion as "Wars are entered into for no good purpose. Combat achieves nothing. Military institutions are about the abuse of power,"¹⁰ and they vigorously disagree with what they see as the simplicity of Fussell's assessments. However, after having done a study of war literature as well and not a historical study, I find myself considering the same overall conclusion as Fussell, while I recognize the simplicity in his argument. From Fussell's interpretation and the criticism of his conclusion, we can see the difference between a study of literature based largely on personal experience and a historical study.

Fussell's work is generally understood in the field of literature as literary criticism. Yet Prior and Wilson argue that although his works invoke the aid of literature to explore conflict in the twentieth century, [...] Fussell's war books are not works of literary criticism. Although a Professor of English, Fussell writes as an historian. He puts it bluntly that his literary training and literary raw material equip him to lay bare the realities of war. Conventional historians, in his opinion, only dress up the distorted, fanciful version of official apologists.¹¹

The overall interpretation of Fussell's work by historians, like Prior and Wilson's, is negative. Leonard V. Smith, war historian, though appreciative of Fussell's work, is highly critical of his archival process, which Smith argues is lax and poorly

¹⁰ Robin Prior and Trevor Wilson. "Paul Fussell at War." *War in History* 1.63 (1994): 63-80, 79.

¹¹ Prior and Wilson 63

documented.¹² While these criticisms are valid from the perspective of a historian, taking his work as literary criticism allows for a better appreciation of his analysis, which is largely based in literary texts.

To be sure, historians and literary critics will use different tools when considering the culture that came out of World Wars I and II, but there is often an overlap between the two. Literary critics take their information primarily though not exclusively, from the text, regardless of whether or not the fictional narrative provides historically factual statements or not. However, context matters, and thus literary critics acknowledge that without these wars, the literature would never have existed, making historical background relevant in a study of war literature. It would seem, then, that to examine works of war literature fully, one has to engage with the works on a literary level while acknowledging their historical background. It is relevant to see Fussell, as well as other literary critics on war literature, as engaging in the study both of literature and of history, as it is not possible to separate fully this particular literary genre from its historical origins.

Echoes of the cynicism related to war that Fussell identifies in war literature are found in the critical analysis of Yuval Noah Harari, a scholar specializing in the military and the medieval period, and also studying the genre of war literature from the Renaissance to the 20th-Century. He agrees with what is evident in Fussell's conclusions based on his study of war literature—there was an end to the romanticization of war within literature. Harari wonders why the romantic myth of war was not destroyed sooner than in the wars of the 20th-Century. He furthers Fussell's conclusion, writing,

¹² Leonard V. Smith. "Paul Fussell's *The Great War and Modern Memory: Twenty-Five Years Later.*" *History and Theory* 40.2 (2001): 241-260, 242.

“Scholars studying twentieth-century war memoirs have reached the almost unanimous conclusion that in the twentieth century, at least in the West, soldiers have become disillusioned with war, and their own image has partly changed from that of heroes to that of victims.”¹³ Harari shows this shift in image with reference to the work of Jean Norton Cru, a World War I veteran who went on to become a scholar of World War I literature.

Cru’s analysis, according to Harari, “sets up the following structure: prewar illusions lead men to war, the war shatters these illusions, and the embittered survivors have the duty and the ability to disillusion the public.”¹⁴ Thus, while Prior and Wilson’s criticism of an overly simplistic conclusion by Fussell may be important and relevant from the perspective of historical scholarship, it would seem that from a literary standpoint, the interpretation of the literature suggests a rejection of war and the myth of its romanticization.

Examining the reasons behind the slow destruction of the war myth, Harari writes that “One possibility is to argue that the nature of war changed sometime around 1916, which led to a change in its image. Up to 1916, for the soldiers, war was indeed heroic and glorious.”¹⁵ Within his study, war literature did not depict the negative effects of war and did not portray the soldier as victim for centuries, not until novels and autobiographies of World War I came onto the literary scene. He postulates that after 1916, soldiers “simply reacted to technological changes in the nature of war, which for the first time transferred soldiers from the ranks of the heroes to the ranks of the

¹³ Yuval Noah Harari. “Martial Illusions: War and Disillusionment in Twentieth-Century and Renaissance Military.” *The Journal of Military History* 69.1 (2005): 43-72, 43.

¹⁴ Harari 44

¹⁵ Harari 48

victims.”¹⁶ Writers of World War I were then the first to help unmask the romantic war myth through their literature.¹⁷ While Prior and Wilson may disagree, these literary critics, Fussell, Harari, and Cru, take war literature, especially literature written by veterans, to interpret how these veterans felt about the war. What the veterans portray in their novels and autobiographies does articulate a straightforward rejection of war.

These fictional texts provide insight into this period, but do not provide a precisely accurate portrayal of war (or of the versions of masculinity that come out of war). They serve to show representations of experiences, potential experiences, in the way (good) historical fiction can. In this vein, they relate to the history that generated them, but they are not totally bound to it. They witness this history, but they do not provide facts. When I compare these texts to their historical contexts, my goal is to demonstrate how they offer an opportunity to see a potential situation within that lived reality, not an actual lived reality during that time.

Just as literature can represent the experience of war and disrupt the romantic war myth, it can also disrupt the myth of the warrior, which is critical to the notion of the romantic war as well as to the notion of masculinity. The myth of the warrior in Western culture begins, according to war and international relations scholar Christopher Coker, with Achilles.¹⁸ A well-known figure in Greek mythology, Achilles was an important character in Homer’s *Iliad*¹⁹ and hero of the Trojan war. He is the ultimate mythic

¹⁶ Harari 48

¹⁷ Harari 49

¹⁸ Christopher Coker. *The Warrior Ethos: Military Culture and the War on Terror*. New York: Routledge, 2007, 5.

¹⁹ Homer. *The Iliad of Homer*. Trans. Andrew Lang, Walter Leaf and Ernest Myers. Project Gutenberg, 2002.

masculine warrior figure. Coker looks to the Achilles of the *Iliad* to describe the warrior, saying that this figure “likes war (though not necessarily killing); [...and] he looks (unconsciously) for what redeems the killing that he is asked to undertake. It is sanctioned by the state, which provides the moral framework within which he works.”²⁰ The physicality of the warrior is also important, for he has “strength of body and soul, and of the two the soul is the more important. Anyone can become physically fit through exercise [...] But stamina is different. It is mental toughness which allows the warrior to go the extra distance [...].”²¹ The body of the figure of the warrior is critical to the myth, as it is the primary tool used to defeat the enemy in early forms of battle, while the soul is necessary to keep the body working at a high level of intensity. The warrior figure, as Coker reflects, is more than his body.

Coker sees Achilles as a complex and troubling warrior figure whose way of warring goes against some of what Coker argues the West expects of him “because [Achilles] does indeed like to kill.”²² He “is undoubtedly heroic, [but] he is also cruel. He sees war in no other light than the scope it provides for his own heroism. His greatness lies almost wholly in his courage and force of will. He has little humanity and even less imagination.”²³ The selfish attitude that Coker describes in the warrior’s view of the relationship between war and his own heroism speaks to General Borrow’s statement of the need to maintain a single-sex military precisely for the reason of ego. Thus Achilles is a troubled hero for the Western canon, but Coker argues that even “if

²⁰ Coker 5

²¹ Coker 4

²² Coker 8

²³ Coker 8

Achilles does not necessarily inspire all warriors[,] the principles he embodies still do [...]. Achilles opens out for the warrior not only a heroic but an ethnical world of conflicting obligations and responsibilities to one's enemies, as well as one's side. For a Westerner these are archetypes that form the warrior myth."²⁴ From Coker's analysis, we see the ways in which one of the first works of war literature, Homer's *Iliad*, has had influence on this form as well as on the interpretation of the real-life experience of war for centuries. Achilles serves to highlight the positive and negative warrior characteristics that we see in war literature and in the myth of the masculine hero.

While Achilles is happy to die for his cause,²⁵ the shift away from the romanticization of war in World War I leads to a rejection of the hero's romantic death. This change removes the assumption that, like Achilles, all masculine men want to die on the battlefield. We see in the literature of World Wars I and II that the acceptance or even welcoming of the hero's death on the battlefield fades. Thus the desire to be the war hero disappears, because the hero inevitably dies, as articulated in the novel *Journal à quatre mains* by sisters Flora and Benoîte Groult. One of the characters writes in her diary, "Vivent les hommes héroïques? Ma pauv' innocente, le sort précisément des hommes héroïques, c'est de ne pas vivre. C'est bien là le drame."²⁶ As the text points out, the war hero who fits into the stereotype of bravery and willingness to fight for the nation at all cost is unlikely to survive.

It is through the rejection of the brave and heroic battlefield death that the soldiers' desire to maintain the status of a State-imposed martial masculinity begins to

²⁴ Coker 8

²⁵ Coker 8

²⁶ Benoîte and Flora Groult. *Journal à quatre mains*. Paris: Denoël, 1962, 54. Author's emphasis

falter. In the literature and films that I examine for this dissertation, we see a formation of standards of behavior that is an alternative to the standard of the traditionally martially masculine warrior. These alternatives are often based on gender within a single-sex atmosphere, but ultimately reject the supposedly highest form of masculinity. These rejections of warrior gender expectations along with the creation of smaller community standards of behavior suggest a willingness to engage with the notion that normative gender behavior is not necessarily “natural.”

The interruption of the warrior myth disrupts the emphasis on and elevation of martial masculinity, a critical element in that myth. War and the construct of masculinity have strong cultural ties, yet while masculinity exists outside of war, it can be difficult to image war existing without a framework of masculinity. Before advancing any further into the connections and disconnections between war and masculinity within literature and film, however, it is imperative to grasp what the term “masculinity” means. It has no singular definition, as it varies according to time and place.

Todd Reeser and Lewis Seifert give a brief overview of changing French masculinities in their collection of essays on masculinities spanning the centuries from the Middle Ages to today, *Entre Hommes: French and Francophone Masculinities in Theory and Culture*:

One might imagine post-medieval French morphologies of masculinity that fit in this category: the Renaissance ‘moderate’ man (considered moderate ‘by nature’) who defines himself in opposition to excessive women but risks effeminate excess at every turn; the *honnête homme* who

seeks to pass off artifice and learning as ‘natural’ elegance so as to dominate others; the *philosophe* who prizes reason even as he fears error and, worse, madness; the nineteenth-century bourgeois who is obsessed with a moral and physical ‘hygiene’ upon which he founds familial and social order; or even the twenty-first-century man who is considered by some to have become too feminine or effeminate.²⁷

Reeser and Seifert point to the broader, normative cultural expectations of masculinity across the most recent centuries. From their description, we see the variations that occurred within one nation.

Regardless of the version of masculinity at any given time, there is consistently an emphasis on meeting that masculine expectation, whatever form it may take. George L. Mosse, a cultural historian who focuses on Europe during the 20th-Century, addresses this pressure: “Manliness²⁸ was supposed to safeguard the existing order against the perils of modernity, but it was also regarded as an indispensable attribute of those who wanted change. Indeed, the exhortation ‘to be a man’ became commonplace, whether during the nineteenth century or the first half of the twentieth century.”²⁹ In any situation, the call to “masculinity” was significant. A close reading of the expression ‘be a man’ suggests that biology is an insufficient manner of showing masculinity. If it were, the call to

²⁷ Todd W. Reeser and Lewis C. Seifert, *Entre Hommes: French and Francophone Masculinities in Culture and Theory*. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2008, 30.

²⁸ “Masculinity” and “manliness” often seem to be used somewhat interchangeably. I have not been able to locate any concrete differences between the two terms. Anecdotally, however, it appears that “manliness” is used in older publications while “masculinity” is used in publications that are more current.

²⁹ George L. Mosse. *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996, 3.

masculinity would be unnecessary, as any biological man would have sufficient qualifications for the term.

R. W. Connell,³⁰ a sociologist and masculinity studies scholar, elaborates on the hierarchy generated by the insufficiency of biology for possessing manliness, coining the term “hegemonic masculinity” in her influential text, *Masculinities*. This term demonstrates that the gendered hierarchy is not simply the patriarchal view that the masculine is superior to and dominant over the feminine, but that there is also a superiority of one kind of masculinity over another. Connell describes hegemonic masculinity “as the configuration of gender practices which embodies the culturally accepted answer to the problem of legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees, (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women.”³¹ Hegemonic masculinity is a type of masculinity that is more aggressive and violent than other types of masculinities.³² Not only does it dominate women, but it also dominates other men who do not meet its standards.³³

This definition of hegemonic masculinity, specifically with its emphasis on domination, lends itself well to a way of framing martial masculinity. Martial masculinity is a form of hegemonic masculinity, as it is the type required of soldiers by military institutions. Aaron Belkin, a scholar and activist whose work focuses on gender

³⁰ Also known as Bob Connell and currently known as Raewyn Connell

³¹ R.W. Connell. *Masculinities*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995, 77.

³² Bob Connell. “Masculinity, Violence, and War.” *War/Masculinity*. Ed. Paul Patton and Ross Poole. Sydney: Intervention Publications, 1985. 4-10, 8.

³³ Connell, *Masculinities* 37

and militarization, writes that the warrior identity is the prime form of masculinity.³⁴ He understands “military masculinity as a set of beliefs, practices, and attributes that can enable individuals—men and women—to claim authority on the basis of affirmative relationships with the military or military ideas.”³⁵ This authority manifests itself in a variety of ways, from the act of serving in the military to physical characteristics like muscles or tattoos.³⁶

Granted, Belkin refers to military masculinity within an American context, yet when considering France’s history of masculine expectations, the basic premise of power through masculinity holds. Judith Surkis, modern history scholar who writes on France, gender and sexuality, explains that the Third Republic set out to educate men on how to be properly masculine within that particular society. The version of masculinity the State sought required both autonomy and social attachment.³⁷ There was a hope that the ideal form of education would produce men who were “both self-governing and still anchored in the social order,”³⁸ yet the Republic recognized this as a challenging balance to teach. They did not want the citizenship to be dependent on the State, but also they did not want citizens to live their lives without consideration for the larger community. This period established a strong connection between the citizen’s responsibility and the responsibility of a soldier.³⁹ The connection between these two forms of responsibility originated

³⁴ Aaron Belkin. *Bring Me Men: Military Masculinity and the Benign Facade of American Empire, 1989-2001*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2012, 2.

³⁵ Belkin 3

³⁶ Belkin 3

³⁷ Judith Surkis. *Sexing the Citizen: Morality and Masculinity in France, 1870-1920*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006, 15.

³⁸ Surkis 70

³⁹ Surkis 218

before the Third Republic, as Napoleon Bonaparte reformulated the educational system to offer “an explicitly military-style regime of discipline that would come to characterize the state-run institutions for the century to come.”⁴⁰ Thus, military expectations would heavily influence those educated in France, and what the State hoped for in the citizen coincided with the expected constitution of the soldier.

Michel Foucault elaborates the varied ways in which societies have been controlled throughout history through institutions, an important one being the military. The military is an institution with a strong influence on societal expectations of soldiers. Foucault examines some of the historical background to the disciplined role of the warrior, and in doing so, describes what was considered the ideal image of a 17th-Century French soldier:

Voici la figure idéale du soldat telle qu’elle était décrite encore au début du XVII^e siècle. Le soldat, c’est d’abord quelqu’un qui se reconnaît de loin; il porte des signes: les signes naturels de sa vigueur et de son courage, les marques aussi de sa fierté; son corps, c’est le blason de sa force et de sa vaillance; et s’il est vrai qu’il doit apprendre peu à peu le métier des armes — essentiellement en se battant—, des manœuvres comme la marche, des attitudes comme le port de tête relèvent pour une bonne part d’une rhétorique corporelle de l’honneur [...].⁴¹

This description of the bodily rhetoric of honor provides an articulation of the ideal version of French martial masculinity. It is visual and physical as well as ideological.

⁴⁰ Surkis 73

⁴¹ Michel Foucault. *Surveiller et Punir*. Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1995, 159.

This description suggests the possession of sufficient control, but Foucault does introduce a contradiction within the potential for soldier power, writing that in the “seconde moitié du XVIII^e siècle: le soldat est devenu quelque chose qui se fabrique; d’une pâte informe, d’un corps inapte, on a fait la machine dont on a besoin [...]”⁴² Foucault then frames the soldier as a being that can be controlled, specifically by the State. The soldier is then a contrast to the warrior, who is more independent and less tied to institutional power. As time passes, the ideal soldier is not all-powerful, but molded and created by an outside force. The State is to create the soldier from nothing into a fierce warrior according to its own needs, modeled after the 17th-Century ideal. However, if the warrior is created by an institutional power, he is not a full warrior, but rather a simple soldier who is dependant rather than independent. Coker argues that a similar shift occurs in the autonomy of the soldier. He writes, “Today’s warriors don’t only serve themselves; they are domesticated. They serve the state, which provides the moral framework within which to act legitimately. Of necessity they serve others, not only their unbounded will.”⁴³ While the warrior must be fierce, if the State cannot control him, he is of no use to it. Today’s warriors, then, fit more with the controlled soldier image rather than that of the independent warrior.

The molding of the soldier into the desired image therefore requires effort—the soldier is unlikely to have all of the attributes within his original personality. Thus he learns, sometimes overtly, sometimes more subtly, from the military institution, how to embody the requirements of martial masculinity while remaining under the control of the

⁴² Foucault, *Surveiller et Punir* 159

⁴³ Coker 7

military. This learning of gendered behavior, done for the benefit of the military, fits with Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity. Butler describes gender as performative, which is "a kind of doing, an incessant activity performed, in part, without one's knowing and without one's willing [...] one does not 'do' one's gender alone. One is always 'doing' with or for another [...]." ⁴⁴ Gender is public and relational, as "the terms that make up one's own gender are, from the start, outside oneself, beyond oneself in a sociality that has no single author [...]." ⁴⁵ Sociality is the significant aspect here, as it serves to reflect the basis of cultural values for gender. While this sociality exists in the military through the requirement for soldiers to embody a certain version of masculinity, soldiers are not the only ones to perform a specific gendered identity.

Gender, according to Butler, does not exist within an individual without the imposition of norms, as "one only determines 'one's own' sense of gender to the extent that social norms exist that support and enable that act of claiming gender for oneself." ⁴⁶ To exist outside of those norms, according to Butler, would eliminate the ability to claim a gender for oneself. Gender is thus distinct from an individual's sense of his or her own subjectivity, as it originates outside of the individual. ⁴⁷

Genders thus exist only in terms of the surrounding culture, and have very little to do with biological sex, though genders are informed by the link between social norms and biological sex. Badinter writes of the divergence between the biological male sex

⁴⁴ Judith Butler. *Undoing Gender*. New York: Routledge, 2004, 1.

⁴⁵ Butler, *Undoing Gender* 1

⁴⁶ Butler, *Undoing Gender* 7

⁴⁷ Butler, *Undoing Gender* 25

and the masculine gender evident in the requirement to prove one's masculinity in her book, *XY: de l'identité masculine*:

L'ordre si souvent entendu: 'Sois un homme' implique que cela ne va pas de soi et que la virilité n'est peut-être pas si naturelle qu'on veut bien le dire. À tout le moins, l'exhortation signifie que la détention d'un chromosome Y ou d'organes sexuels masculins ne suffit pas à circonscrire le mâle humain. Etre un homme implique un travail, un effort qui ne semble pas être exigé de la femme. Il est plus rare d'entendre: 'Sois une femme,' comme un rappel à l'ordre, alors que l'exhortation au petit garçon, à l'adolescent et même à l'adulte masculin est propos courant dans la plupart des sociétés.⁴⁸

In sum, Badinter argues that while men must consistently act out their masculinity because biological sex does not fully serve as proof, women are not required to do the same for their femininity. While there is a test for masculinity, one does not exist for femininity. Badinter proposes that "nous faisons comme si la féminité était naturelle."⁴⁹

Regardless of whether or not gender identities require proof, her statement does assume that a masculine gender identity would only be required of a biological man. Thus, in

⁴⁸ Badinter 13-4

⁴⁹ Badinter 14. Although this statement seems to contradict Butler's argument of gender's overall performativity, I do not believe that this is necessarily the case. To be sure, I agree to a certain extent that femininity does not generally require the same kind of proof as masculinity, but proof and performativity are not the same. Though women are not socially required to *prove* femininity as men are—proof, coincidentally, is an active move—women must *perform* their femininity. To be sure, it is possible that there is no required proof of femininity because patriarchal structures simply enforce its enactment so well. This suggestion leads to the question of why masculinity is not as well enforced. Though certainly provocative, these theories are certainly beyond the scope of my work.

spite of the need to prove masculinity, biological sex does culturally determine which gender identity needs proof (or not). Biology therefore does serve to create societal assumptions regarding an individual's gender. Gender-focused sociologist Arthur Brittan, in *Masculinity and Power*, writes that

[...] men and women do not exist outside history, but at the same time they do not exist outside their bodies. From the moment a child is born, he or she is exposed to a world in which the facts of gender are taken at their face value. A boy's genitals are the first sign of his potential membership of the category male.⁵⁰ Such a categorization is not simply a label—it affects the way in which he defines his difference from the category female. Biology and society are never separate—they mutually constitute each other [...].⁵¹

Connell makes a similar argument in terms of masculinity, that “true masculinity is almost always thought to proceed from men's bodies—to be inherent in a male body or to express something about a male body.”⁵² The claims made by Badinter, Brittan, and Connell all come together in a similar fashion with regard to the formation of masculine identity: although there is an assumption of a masculine gender identity based on biological sex, male biological sex is not sufficient to prove masculinity. Masculinity, as a social construct rather than a “natural” state, requires enactment—a “test.”

⁵⁰ I would argue that in contemporary culture, because of the reliability of new ultrasound technologies, the gendering of babies based on their biological sex begins even before birth, as soon as the biological sex is detectable *in utero*.

⁵¹ Arthur Brittan. *Masculinity and Power*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989, 14.

⁵² Connell, *Masculinities* 45

The cultural model of gender is complex. In this dissertation, I engage with literature and films based on the assumption that there is a social imposition and individual performance of gendered identities, but I am more concerned with the specific model that relates to martial masculinity, rather than with a more overarching model of gender behavior. I focus on the expectations of martial masculinity that the State imposes on the soldier and all male citizens within militarized cultures, whether in or out of the trenches. The novels and films that I analyze in my project reveal the ways in which the expectations of martial masculinity on the soldier are subverted and altered to meet specific situational needs. Some of the narratives also reveal the ways in which martial masculinity can lead to corruption or destructive behavior.

Most of the titles with which I engage are fiction. These texts and films on the subject of war are set in the trenches, in hospitals, in occupied Paris, and in concentration camps during World Wars I and II—places that were the sites of the historical events of these wars. The stories may be fictions, but the settings are not invented for their telling. Furthermore, most of the authors have experienced the subject on which they write. Some even give their narrators and protagonists names similar to their own, blurring the lines between fiction and non-fiction. Regardless of whether or not writers and their publishers publish these works as fictions, the factual nature of the narrative's subject matter and the author's proximity to the historical events has an impact on the reader's interpretation of the text, because this proximity gives a sense, whether accurate or not, of authenticity.⁵³

⁵³ Anecdotally, I recently had an experience of observing readers' interpretation of this type of literature. I attended a public book club called *Books and Bars* (<http://booksandbars.com/>) for a discussion of Tim

Cru considers authenticity in war writing:

Certains écrivains, aidés de quelques critiques littéraires, ont cherché à créer une confusion sur la nature ou le genre des romans de guerre. Tantôt ils réclament pour ces œuvres les privilèges de la littérature purement esthétique, tantôt ils prétendent avoir servi la vérité en créant une synthèse de la guerre plus exacte dans son sens profond, plus utile de par l'impression qu'elle produit, que la relation directe des témoins à carnets. On ne peut leur permettre de se réclamer ainsi de deux genres distincts, et d'échapper à toute critique en se baptisant, suivant les besoins, chair ou poisson.⁵⁴

Smith explains Cru's assertion that many of the descriptions in war novels were not factually possible within the scope of the tragedy, but that "within a metanarrative of tragedy, testimonies in all genres produced their own truth that transcended empirical evidence—of the soldier as victim."⁵⁵ Cru ultimately strives for "une image de la guerre d'après ceux qui l'ont vue de plus près: de faire connaître les sentiments du soldat, qui ne

O'Brien's *The Things They Carried* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1990.), a novel about the Vietnam War. The readers who did their research beforehand understood that this novel is a work of fiction, even though the protagonist and the author share a name. Yet when the moderator gave additional biographical details to "prove" the fictional nature of the book (i.e. the protagonist had a daughter he took to Vietnam years after the war, while the author had no children when he published the book and later had two boys), they expressed dissatisfaction. Some did not believe that sections of the book were fictional, specifically the stories from in the trenches. The theme of authenticity frequently entered the discussion. Furthermore, in the keynote speech at the 2013 Midwest Modern Language Association convention, fiction writer Camden Joy discussed this issue within fiction (Joy has a specific stake in the question of authenticity, as he writes under a pseudonym. His "real" name is Tom Adelman). He told the anecdote of Erich Maria Remarque's editors who checked up on the claim that he served in the military before the publication of *All Quiet on the Western Front* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1982.). Even though this was a fictional novel, Remarque's credibility as an authentic soldier mattered.

⁵⁴ Jean Norton Cru. *Du témoignage*. Paris: Librairie Gallimard, 1930, 94-5.

⁵⁵ Leonard V. Smith. *The Embattled Self: French Soldiers' Testimony of the Great War*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007, 8.

sont pas des sentiments acquis par imitation ou par influence, mais qui sont sa réaction directe au contact de la guerre [...].”⁵⁶ This writing does the work of showing the inner workings of the soldier’s experience, even when depicting physically impossible scenarios.

Based on Cru’s work on testimonies of war, Smith wonders how to examine “experience represented in the written word.”⁵⁷ He sets out to study how experience becomes understood as such through narrative, arguing “that any combatant’s testimony is testimony to *something*, but that something is often not an empirically verifiable reality. Rather, these texts are about a struggle for coherence.”⁵⁸ When these texts are written by authors who experienced something similar to their narratives, these narratives serve as a form of testimony, of witnessing. While not in the same genre as works of declared testimony (only one work in my corpus fits this description, Antelme’s *L’Espèce humaine*), they are similarly a “testimony to *something*.” What these works provide is a glimpse at different *experiences* of war, varied and not standing in for each other or for fact.

This notion of using literature to articulate the experience of war is significant. My study is a literary one. While I explore themes related to history and sociology, the basis for this analysis is in literature and film—storytelling. A recent segment on National Public Radio’s program *All Things Considered* references the importance of storytelling through literature and film of historical moments. The segment is on a recent

⁵⁶ Cru, *Du témoignage* 13

⁵⁷ L.V. Smith, *The Embattled Self* x

⁵⁸ L.V. Smith, *The Embattled Self* x. Author’s emphasis

documentary on the Roma people and the Holocaust, one of the first telling their story. The significance of making this documentary, as the host Robert Siegel describes it, is that there are no solid numbers on the Roma victims of the Holocaust, since, according to “Ronald Lee, a Romany Canadian writer, [...] the Roma lacked the social infrastructure to make the world aware.”⁵⁹ Lee says, “We had no professors. We had no journalists. We had no writers. We had no filmmakers. We had only begun to enter mainstream society when Hitler came to power.”⁶⁰ Lee states the importance of literature and film within the context of testimony. When information as seemingly basic and factual as the number of deaths in a particular event are lost because of a lack of individuals who are able to produce literature, we see how significant literature is to remembering and to learning about history. The intellectual class that serves to create these stories, whether journalists or writers, did not exist within this culture, and because of that gap, stories are missing. The availability on literature and film about this time period only makes the gap within the Roma culture all the most glaring, and shows us that we must study literature within historical contexts, as it provides details and understandings of the events that are not available elsewhere. The study of war literature thus contributes to the study of war.

To introduce my analysis of this genre, I start my dissertation with novels set in the trenches, which are the closest to depicting the experience of combat. In Chapter one, *Negotiations with a State Imposed Martiallly Masculine Identity*, I examine the ways in which soldiers understand their role in contrast to or in conjunction with the way in

⁵⁹ “Filmmaker Brings Light To Roma, Holocaust Victims Lost To History.” *All Things Considered*. National Public Radio. 20 May 2014. 10 June 2014.

⁶⁰ “Filmmaker Brings Light To Roma, Holocaust Victims Lost To History.”

which the State understands the same role, specifically with regard to the expectation of masculinity. This analysis starts with a study of Henri Barbusse's *Le feu: journal d'une escouade* (1916),⁶¹ a novel written while the author was in the trenches, providing a cynical examination of the soldier's position within the war compared to the power of the State. This work was largely received as a pacifist novel whose graphic depictions of war served to show its horrors. The second novel I examine in this chapter is Louis-Ferdinand Céline's *Voyage au bout de la nuit* (1932),⁶² a work that was seen as revolutionary with regard to Céline's usage of language and style, especially his heavy use of vernacular and ellipses. This narrative offers a cautionary tale of the abuse of martial masculinity once the war is over.

Chapter two, called *Injury, Death, Race, and Masculinity: The Nurse's Novel*, takes my analysis out of the trenches, but still within a violent space. War novels written by women often take place in the hospital, as this was the main opportunity for women to participate in the war. In Noëlle Roger's *Les carnets d'une Infirmière* (1915)⁶³ and Madeleine Clemenceau Jacquemaire's *Les hommes de bonne volonté* (1919),⁶⁴ we find an examination of a female perspective on the consequences of war, often specifically with regard to the ways in which the war and its injuries will alter men's lives and livelihood.⁶⁵ In addition to examining masculinity within the context of injury and death,

⁶¹ Henri Barbusse. *Le feu: journal d'une escouade*. Paris: Flammarion, 1945.

⁶² Louis-Ferdinand Céline. *Voyage au bout de la nuit*. Paris: Gallimard, 1952.

⁶³ Noëlle Roger. *Les Carnets d'une Infirmière*. Paris: Attinger Frères, Éditeurs, 1915.

⁶⁴ Madeleine Clemenceau Jacquemaire. *Les hommes de bonne volonté*. Paris: Calmann-Lévy, Editeurs, 1919.

⁶⁵ As is true with many novels by women originating in a World War I experience, these novels did not and have not gained much critical or scholarly attention. Speculations on the reasons for this are found in Chapter two.

I use this chapter to examine the role of women in the war, as well as colonial masculinities. This last type of masculinity is rare in European trench literature, as the units were racially segregated and there was little interracial interaction, but the hospitals treated all soldiers. For this reason, nurses came into frequent contact with colonial soldiers, and novels that focus on them are better able to depict the expectations of and potential contradictions within colonial masculinity.

The Community vs. the Individual: Hierarchies of Masculinities in the Trenches, the title of Chapter three, takes us back to the trenches once again. In this chapter, I treat Stanley Kubrick's film *Paths of Glory* (1957)⁶⁶ and Blaise Cendrars' *La main coupée* (1946),⁶⁷ a novel seen by Anne Mounic, author, translator, and literary critic, as defiant of the military institution.⁶⁸ Returning to Henri Barbusse's *Le feu: journal d'une escouade* (1916), I examine the ways in which the hierarchy of the military does or does not have an impact on the hierarchies of masculinity within the trenches. Hierarchies, which are systems of classification based on order or rank and being either officially set in place through an institution, or unofficially used within a community, serve to classify individuals within their world. The military structure is the ultimate form of institutional hierarchy. Similarly, though unofficially, the expectations of gender behaviors contribute to a system of ranking, with the highest level being that of Connell's "hegemonic

⁶⁶ *Paths of Glory*. Dir. Stanley Kubrick. Perf. Kirk Douglas. 1957. Film. This film was received well by critics, as "after it was produced, [Kubrick] was recognized as a significant American director (Walker, Alexander, Sybil Taylor and Ulrich Ruchti. *Stanley Kubrick, Director: A Visual Analysis*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2000, 66.).

⁶⁷ Blaise Cendrars. *La main coupée*. Paris: Denoël, 1946.

⁶⁸ Anne Mounic. "Récit de guerre et éthique. Singularité, communauté et temporalité *Adieu à tout cela* de Robert Graves et *La main coupée* de Blaise Cendrars." *E-rea* 8.3 (2011): 2-12, 22.

masculinity.”⁶⁹ By using the concept of hierarchy—both official and unofficial—as the basis of analysis for these chapters, I aim to demonstrate the ways in which these texts and films engage with the official hierarchies while creating their own alternative hierarchies. From these alternative hierarchies and the way in which they serve the individual or the small community over the larger community of the nation, the way official hierarchies do, we see how detrimental official hierarchies—and gender expectations that subscribe to those hierarchies—can be to the individual. Barbusse’s novel also allows for further analysis on colonial masculinities, this time outside of the specifically injured bodies of the nursing novels, although still in a vulnerable space, one of the trenches. My analysis is based the perspectives of the narrators, all of whom are (presumably) white, making the discussion focused not on the self-understanding of colonial masculinities by the African soldier, but rather of the outside, colonialist view of Black masculinities and how that conception changes through war.

Given the importance of hierarchy in both war and in gender, my fourth chapter, entitled *Militarized Spaces: Hierarchies of Masculinities Outside the Trenches*, provides an analysis of hierarchy in works that do not take place in the trenches, but still exist within a militarized setting. Analysis of these works is important because it is the militarized settings that precede wars and that remain once the wars have ended. Thus while war provides an intense way of enacting and embodying masculinity, the pre- and

⁶⁹ One could argue that through what Surkis refers to as the “sexing” of the citizen—that is, the efforts to ensure that the citizen emulated the masculine soldier while embodying State-sanctioned gender traits and actions—that the gender hierarchy was also an official hierarchy.

post-war militarized cultures are what maintain military masculinity to be later mobilized during the intensity of war.

It is not only the writings of combatants that offer insight through which to understand war. Jean Gallagher, English literary scholar with a focus on gender, argues that

the wartime experiences of noncombatants provide important material for understanding and for exploring the intersecting ideologies of war and gender. Vision is one of the crucial elements that has traditionally marked the gendered division of war experience: men “see battle”; women, as non-combatants *par excellence*, do not. However, even as women have often been identified as those who do not see during war, they have at the same time been construed as the primary spectators of war.⁷⁰

The notion of “vision” in war speaks to the question of authenticity, and those who can claim the experience of war: “Vision has functioned, then, not only as a mark of and basis for authenticity and authority in writing about war but has played an important role in the development and gendering of cultural discourses of war.”⁷¹ As such, these narratives by and about non-combatants are important to the genre of war literature. Benoîte and Flora Groult’s *Journal à quatre mains* (1962)⁷² tells the story of two teenage girls’ coming of

⁷⁰ Jean Gallagher. *The World Wars Through the Female Gaze*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1998, 3.

⁷¹ Gallagher 3

⁷² Similar to the nursing novels of Chapter two, this work by the Groult sisters has not gained significant critical attention. See Chapter four for some of the scholarship related to this work.

age during the Nazi Occupation of Paris, and the way in which they interpret the men of different nationalities around them as well as their own position as women in a changing society. My analysis shifts from the large yet occupied space of Paris to one that is confined and restricted, where I propose that Ousmane Sembène's film *Camp de Thiaroye* (1988)⁷³ provides a fictional testimony of the massacre that occurred at the eponymous military transit camp. Laura Rice, a comparative literature and film scholar specializing in Africa, remarks that this film is France's "icon for shame in the aftermath of World War II."⁷⁴ This film depicts the unbalanced power dynamic between the colonial soldiers and the French officers in the period after the war and the violence resulting from this inequality.

My analysis of this film examines the function of hierarchy through the lens of race and nationality but still within a militarized setting. Finally, I engage with Robert Antelme's *L'Espèce humaine* (1947),⁷⁵ which is the only work in my corpus that claims non-fiction status and one that gained significant scholarly attention as a novel from the concentration camps. As a memoir set in a fascist concentration camp, it articulates a rigid form of hierarchy. The stakes of this hierarchy are high, as the dehumanization of the prisoners by the SS officers leads to death, and the narrator articulates the importance of maintaining a version of masculinity as a means to cling to humanity, and therefore to survival.

⁷³ *Camp de Thiaroye*. Dir. Ousmane Sembène. 1987.

⁷⁴ Laura Rice. "African Conscripts/European Conflicts: Race, Memory, and the Lessons of War." *Cultural Critique* 45 (2000): 109-149, 142.

⁷⁵ Robert Antelme. *L'espèce humaine*. Paris: Gallimard, 1957.

My study focuses primarily on the ways in which literature and film engage with the interactions between masculinity and war. Literary and filmic storytelling mechanisms are particularly useful for learning about and understanding the cultural dimension of the historical moment. Masculine gender expectations, as I show, stem both from State institutions as well as from literary myths about the warrior. The requirement of masculinity aims to perpetuate this myth. I employ the titles I have selected to emphasize the culturally constructed nature of masculinity and the ways in which 20th-Century war stories reject or subvert the warrior myth. I also examine the ways in which, when there is an attempt to uphold the myth, the consequences are typically negative, since ultimately, gendered expectations reveal the weakness of masculinity.

Chapter 1: Negotiations with a State-Imposed Martial Masculine Identity

Focusing on war and gender, historians Christopher Forth and Bertrand Taithe write that masculinity is a constant process of becoming,⁷⁶ and thus an important part of identity formation. Yet for men at war, martial masculinity needs to be already firmly in place. According to Mosse's analysis on gender in the 20th-Century, gender roles were critical to the rising sense of nationalism in Europe at the onset of World War I, and everyone had a designated place in society.⁷⁷ The expectation of men in general was that they wholly embody manliness, with its ties to warrior characteristics. Rooted in the tradition of knighthood, "manliness was not just a matter of courage, it was a pattern of manners and morals".⁷⁸ A masculine identity for all male citizens was critical to maintain a sense of cohesive nationalism, as it "symbolized the nation's spiritual and material virility. It called for strength of body and mind, but not brute force—the individual's energies had to be kept under control."⁷⁹ These were the qualities the nation found necessary as Europe engaged in two early 20th-Century wars in a relatively short amount of time, namely World Wars I and II.⁸⁰ From Mosse's analysis, we glean that the

⁷⁶ Christopher E. Forth and Bertrand Taithe. *French Masculinities: History, Culture, and Politics*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, 4.

⁷⁷ George L. Mosse. *Nationalism and Sexuality: Middle-Class Morality and Sexual Norms in Modern Europe*. Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985, 16.

⁷⁸ Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality* 13

⁷⁹ Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality* 23

⁸⁰ To give a timeframe for these conflicts, France engaged in World War I from 1914-1919, and in World War II from 1939-1940, with the German occupation of France lasting until 1944.

State perceived masculinity as the embodiment and balance of courage with manners and morals, as well as bodily strength with control.

To begin my study, I turn to the identity of the soldier within the corpus of literature and film I have selected to provide an analysis of the figures of characters living in a culture that emphasized masculinity. These characters, who serve as representations of the soldier, interact with the expectation of martial masculinity through their actions and their words. At this time, the nations of Europe wanted men to embody martial masculinity, and these texts serve to fictionalize and put into question this martially masculine identity. While we see that the State has a complex perception of expectations of masculinity of the soldiers, these characters never expressly articulate this expectation using the term “masculinity.” While they discuss what it means to be a man, it is through actions rather than through characteristics. Their interpretation is more fluid than that of the State, and more open to the situation at hand.

There is a history to these expectations that started before the 20th-Century. The French Revolution led to the full setting into place of the modern brand of gender roles and the family⁸¹ and “the ideal of masculinity was reinforced” by the State during the Napoleonic wars.⁸² Masculinity then became of critical importance between the 19th- and 20th-Centuries. At this time, masculinity was employed “to safeguard the existing order against the perils of modernity, which threatened the clear distinction between what was considered normal and abnormality.”⁸³ This emphasis on masculinity was an important

⁸¹ Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality* 6

⁸² Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality* 13

⁸³ Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality* 23

part of the culture leading up to World War I. War itself, according to Mosse, then became a way to prove one's masculinity, cementing a man's status within his society.⁸⁴ Within the framework of war, a masculine gendered identity has a strong relationship to a soldier's identity, leading to a specifically martial masculine identity. Modern Europe increasingly emphasized identity and masculinity, so argues Italian and gender studies scholar Lorenzo Benadusi, to bolster nationalism. Benadusi writes on Italy specifically, but gives the following context on identity that was relevant in all of Europe during the early 20th-Century conflicts,

The search for a new identity and collective order also influenced the male image and the model of masculinity that, with the spread of nationalism, had increasingly become associated with 'warrior-like' characteristics. Since a strong, powerful nation had to be made up of virile men, masculinity was associated with the ability to fight for the homeland; it became symbolic of virtue, health, vigor, and national regeneration.⁸⁵

The identity of the nation rests on the ability of the male citizen to maintain characteristics of virility ("virtue, health, vigor"), establishing a very specific type of martially masculine identity imposed on and expected of men in order to succeed as a nation. For men, there was no room for displays of gender behavior outside of the masculine norm—they could not display "feminine" characteristics and still have the

⁸⁴ Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality* 114

⁸⁵ Lorenzo Benadusi. *The Enemy of the New Man*. Trans. Suzanne Dingee and Jennifer Pudney. Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2012, 14.

acceptance of the community, as there was an assumption that such men could not serve the State.

When a nation insists upon a gendered identity, and very specifically, a gendered soldier identity, we can turn to Louis Althusser's notion of interpellation to see the ways in which the citizen might already inhabit that identity before becoming a soldier due to underlying expectations of the State. Just as the State imposes an ideology on the individual first through educational then military institutions, "nous suggérons alors que l'idéologie 'agit' ou 'fonctionne' de telle sorte qu'elle 'recrute' des sujets parmi les individus (elle les recrute tous), ou 'transforme' les individus en sujets (elle les transforme tous) par cette opération très précise que nous appelons *l'interpellation* [...]."⁸⁶ Interpellation pulls the citizen into this identity. To demonstrate how interpellation functions, Althusser uses the example of the policeman who calls out "Hé vous là-bas!" and the individual becomes the "vous."⁸⁷ Similarly, for my purposes, when the State drafts a man into the military and dictates his gendered identity based on that role, the soldier was "toujours-déjà" a militarized subject, just as Althusser writes, "*les individus sont toujours-déjà des sujets*".⁸⁸ The man (and later, the woman) pulled into the military, whether he joins voluntarily or only when compelled by the State, is always-already a soldier, a role which is imposed particularly upon the citizen. This may be all the more true in France, given Judith Surkis' description of the way in which Napoleon

⁸⁶ Louis Althusser. "Idéologie et appareils idéologiques d'État. (Notes pour une recherche)." 26 August 2008. *University of Minnesota Libraries*, 29. 14 February 2014.

<http://classiques.uqac.ca/contemporains/althusser_louis/ideologie_et_AIE/ideologie_et_AIE.html>

⁸⁷ Althusser 50.

⁸⁸ Althusser 50. Author's emphasis

militarized State education.⁸⁹ The citizen, who was always male, was expected to be always-already a soldier as a result of the education process. Althusser explains that this interpellation only exists because of ideology.⁹⁰ Within the context of war, this ideology is that of a militarized nation imposed on the citizen by the State and more specifically, the military institutions within the State. However, while the nation dictates the role of soldier-subject, the soldier does not always agree upon the specifics of the identity that the nation has imposed upon him through the State ideology. What the novels I examine show are the ways in which, by rejecting the ideology of the State, the soldier-subject's relationship to his identity of "interpellation" is not so simple. Being interpellated into a specifically martially masculine subject identity is not simply a matter of being called out as a soldier. The State, by militarizing everyday culture and education, assumes that the citizen is a soldier. While he becomes the soldier in reality, this literature shows that when he exists in the violent space of war, his efforts to live may trump this interpellation from the State. To preserve his life, the soldier will then engage in actions more in line with his own priorities than those of the State, actions that do not fit with a rigid expectation of a martial masculine identity.

Gender is then a critical theme in examining male and consequently, soldierly, identity during this period. While masculine identity was critical in this period, there was also an emphasis on women's roles and a feminine identity alongside the masculine identity, serving to create boundaries and establish rigid gender roles. Masculine and

⁸⁹ See the Introduction for more on Surkis' point of the French citizen as "sexed."

⁹⁰ Althusser 50

feminine identities help to define the ways in which we understand “gender.” Judith Butler elaborates on the relationship between masculinity, femininity, and gender:

To claim that gender is a norm is not quite the same as saying that there are normative views of femininity and masculinity, even though there clearly are such normative views. Gender is not exactly what one ‘is’ nor is it precisely what one ‘has.’ Gender is the apparatus by which the production and normalization of masculine and feminine take place along with the interstitial forms of hormonal, chromosomal, psychic, and performative that gender assumes.⁹¹

The expected norm at this time was that men and women would inhabit the proper forms of their gender, and that they would exist fully within the parameters of masculinity or femininity, respectively.

I would like to use Butler’s assertion of the performative dimension of normative gender to connect the performance of gender to that of sexuality. I do so by signaling Foucault’s formulation of public sexuality that, as he explains, begins with the usage of the term “sexuality” in the 19th-Century. Foucault writes that

l’usage du mot [sexualité] s’est établi en relation avec d’autres phénomènes: le développement de domaines de connaissances diverses (couvrant aussi bien les mécanismes biologiques de la reproduction que les variantes individuelles ou sociales du comportement; la mise en place d’un ensemble de règles et de normes, en partie traditionnelles, en partie nouvelles, qui prennent appui sur des institutions religieuses, judiciaires,

⁹¹ Butler, *Undoing Gender* 42.

pédagogiques, médicales; des changements aussi dans la façon dont les individus sont amenés à prêter sens et valeur à leur conduite, à leurs devoirs, à leurs plaisirs, à leurs sentiments et sensations, à leurs rêves.⁹²

Thus, sexuality is brought into the public space by a variety of factors, ranging from the scientific, to the institutional, to the way in which people learned to express themselves publicly. Sexuality is then a piece of one's identity that exists outwardly as well as within the individual. By using both Butler's notion of public gender and Foucault's of public sexuality, we see that an important commonality between the two is their existence and importance within the public sphere. This importance exists in spite of the very private nature of these identities. The expression of sexuality and sexual orientation, was very important to the State's expectation of masculinity, and marriage served as a public expression of sexuality. For the married soldier, theoretically controlled by the presumption of fidelity, heterosexuality was required.⁹³

Concerning gender more specifically, Butler suggests in the above citation that there is a relationship between gender, and masculinity and femininity, but also that masculinity and femininity are not explicitly "genders." Masculinity and femininity thus function within gender and serve as normalizing—if operating along biological lines—expressions of identity, including sexuality, of heterosexuality. Culturally speaking, there is a rigid definition of what these identities entail, however varied they may truly be on an individual level. R.W. Connell argues that masculinity and femininity as terms are important for analyzing gender. These words speak to variations within men's roles and

⁹² Michel Foucault. *Histoire de la sexualité, 2: L'usage des plaisirs*. Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1984, 10.

⁹³ Surkis 1

women's roles, even when they diverge from the rigid cultural definition: "the terms 'masculine' and 'feminine' point beyond categorical sex difference to the ways men differ among themselves, and women differ among themselves, in matters of gender. *Normative* definitions recognize these differences and offer a standard: masculinity is what men ought to be".⁹⁴ There are then variations between masculinity and femininity, as well as within them. In sum, Connell sees these terms as existing along a spectrum, outside of biology, but knows that these normative definitions do not account for the possible variations within them. For example, understanding the term "masculine" as part of a spectrum allows these variations to be less rigidly confined to the biological male sex. Informed by these thinkers, I have come to see masculinity and femininity as potentially varied identities that society and culture binds to the norms of gender identity and sexuality, and I will proceed in this dissertation with this understanding of the terms in mind.

In the novels I examine, there are variations of masculinity that emphasize traits that are useful in war and that create a sharp distinction between masculine and feminine identities and roles. Through this focus, I examine the ways in which the characters relate to the particular variation of masculinity in war and I explore the ways in which these characters, as soldiers, come to define themselves, as well as their role in their world, through or outside of the expectation of martial masculinity.

Through my analysis, these texts reveal an underlying expectation that the men embody martial masculinity as a key factor in their identity. There are times when they react to that expectation, either through words or through actions, in ways that reveal that

⁹⁴ Connell, *Masculinities* 69-70. Author's emphasis

the expectation does not necessarily lead to fulfillment of intended behaviors and attitudes. Thus, I demonstrate the manner in which, during these high-pressure moments of expected martial masculinity, these characters turn that identity on its head, and create their own identity that matches their priorities and their personalities, rather than maintain the identity that serves the nation. This is especially true, yet complicated, in Henri Barbusse's *Le feu: journal d'une escouade*. Barbusse's characters discuss the ways in which their situation does not match the national rhetoric of the martially masculine identity, and through community they create a complex understanding of their position within the trenches. As for the second novel I examine in this chapter, *Voyage au bout de la nuit*, Louis-Ferdinand Céline's Bardamu aligns with an alternate and ineffective version of martial masculinity. His does not relate as closely to this modern European expectation of manhood, but rather to the heightened version of martial masculinity found in fascist ideology. Barbusse's and Céline's characters work through their identities as soldiers (and in Bardamu's case, also while re-integrating into civilian life) and the narratives reveal how that role shapes them, as well as how the characters intersect with the prescribed identity of a martially masculine male.

To be sure, the texts with which I engage are fiction. Yet they do exist in an in-between space. Leonard V. Smith and French literary scholar Michèle Chossat concede this point, indicating that, "Il n'est jamais facile de tirer un trait net visant à démarquer la fiction de la non-fiction dans les écrits de la première guerre mondiale."⁹⁵ While they are

⁹⁵ Leonard V. Smith and Michèle Chossat. "Le corps et la survie d'une identité dans les écrits de guerre français." *Annales, Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 55.1 (2000): 111-133, 113.

fictional texts, they do nonetheless have close ties to their very real authors.⁹⁶ Barbusse and Céline both served in World War I. Céline's main narrating character, Ferdinand Bardamu has a first name that is similar to that of his creator, and while Barbusse's narrator is unnamed, he describes writing his story down in the trenches, which is precisely what Barbusse himself did, publishing his novel during the war. Bardamu also shares biographical details with Céline, given that both travelled to Africa and Detroit after the war, and that both the author and the narrator were doctors.

These texts invite the reader to draw comparisons between the narrators and the authors, between fiction and autobiography, and they are encouraged to do so through the undeniable similarities presented between the texts and real life. These texts belong to a type of hybrid genre, which does not fit precisely into either fiction or autobiography. This is not to say that the identities of soldiers laid out in these novels are the same as the identities of their creators. This assumption would take this hybrid genre too far into autobiography. However, under the veil of fiction, these authors are able to express the sentiment behind their experiences, even if the authors may not have exactly translated those experiences to the page. The "soldier identities" that I examine through these texts, while not bound to the identities of the authors, are not wholly divorced from them either and thus can be read as identities that relate to the emotional and psychological experience of war, even if not directly to the lived experience. These textual soldier

⁹⁶ L.V. Smith and Chossat in fact fall into this in-between space in their analysis of these texts, not distinguishing between the narrator and the author, specifically in their analysis of Barbusse's *Le feu* and Cendrars' *La main coupée*. I hope to create more of a distinction between the two by avoiding references to the authors' biographical details during my textual analysis.

identities inhabit a middle space, in between fiction and non-fiction, which makes their analyses so rich and complex.

Henri Barbusse's *Le feu: journal d'une escouade*

A novel set in the trenches of World War I, Barbusse's *Le feu* offers a vivid picture of war and combat. Eberherd Demm, a modern history scholar specializing in World War I, writes that the novel has always been considered "l'ouvrage pacifistic par excellence," this novel somehow avoided the censorer's blackout pen.⁹⁷ The author does not spare the reader with his descriptions of soldiers in battle whose stinking corpses pile up, offering an unforgiving picture of the concrete consequences of battle. Compared to other war novels published at the time, Barbusse's does not idealize anything about the war, but rather describes "le végétement misérable des soldats dans la boue des tranchées, leurs blessures horribles et leurs morts effroyables."⁹⁸ That the censors allowed the publication of this novel during the war opens up the question of *Le feu's* stance on pacifism. If it were a pacifist novel in the anti-war sense, then it would not be accepted for publication. Demm uses both an analysis of Barbusse's personal life as well as the novel's very publication as an argument to question the public's perception of this novel's pacifism, writing, "la tendance de Barbusse suit parfaitement les propagandes de guerre alliées et françaises, qui présentent le Kaiser comme l'incarnation du mal et les Allemands comme des monstres pataugeant dans le sang."⁹⁹ Though it is a compelling

⁹⁷ Eberhard Demm. "Barbusse et son feu: la dernière cartouche de la propagande de guerre française." *Guerres mondiales et conflits contemporains* 197 (2000): 43-63, 43.

⁹⁸ Demm 51

⁹⁹ Demm 52-3

question given how this novel demonstrates the ways in which military experience changes identity perception and ideological beliefs, in my analysis I am not concerned with whether or not this novel promotes pacifism. Rather, I am interested in the way in which the characters engage with a community-based sentiment while at war, in direct opposition to what we will see in Bardamu's individualistic attitude, as well as with how they understand their identities as soldiers as a result of their experience in the trenches. I argue that by living this experience in community, the individual soldier maintains a more positive identity while at risk in war than Bardamu through his isolation. Barbusse's novel reveals these mental transformations through interactions between characters, thus foregrounding the communal nature of the text.

The ways in which Barbusse articulates his characters serve to take my analysis an important step further. The characters and their dialogue demonstrate the ways in which the experience of war and its consequences shifts an individual's understanding of himself and his position within his society. Through the question of the connection between the body and one's identity, bodily vulnerability and identity come together here, because, according to Smith and Chossat, to "admettre la vulnérabilité d'une identité assignée à un corps matériel signifiait que l'on admettait la vulnérabilité de l'identité elle-même."¹⁰⁰ Barbusse's text provides the context for understanding that the experience of war is clearly transformative, even if one exits the conflict apparently physically intact. These scholars argue that Barbusse's novel fully articulates the

¹⁰⁰ L.V. Smith and Chossat 113. Smith and Chossat's argument necessarily requires a belief in the body-mind connection, a connection that they do articulate as important when examining soldier identity. To be sure, due to the nature of the soldier's task, there is no way to take his body out of his identity.

transformation of identity through bodily means, writing that in *Le feu*, “le corps devient le lieu de la transformation sociale. L'identité est transformée par le biais des déformations horribles que la guerre inflige au corps.”¹⁰¹ Regardless of the mental state of the soldier, experiencing that type of brutality fundamentally changes the way an individual sees himself, and the way he relates to other men as well as to his own country. Both Céline’s *Voyage* and Barbusse’s *Le feu* provide gritty images of the experience of a soldier at war. Nevertheless, their depictions are wholly different, as are their messages.

While Céline’s narrator is cynical, cowardly, and generally unlikeable, the characters in Barbusse’s novel are more personable and understandable. Both novels show the actions and reactions of men who identify as soldiers, and who become transformed by this identification. Yet this similarity is superficial. Bardamu becomes a twisted and dark character who grows more and more internally violent with every turn of the page. Barbusse’s novel, in contrast, begins and ends in the trenches, so we never see the characters as civilians, and though they grow cynical and question their role in the war, they do so in a reflexive and philosophical way, compared to Bardamu, who simply reacts to his surroundings. Barbusse’s characters are more thoughtful about who they are in this new context of war, engaging in a discussion and debate about their positions, and participating in the sense of community established by the military institution.

The unnamed narrator, a soldier in the war who writes a book while in the trenches, lays out what a soldier is supposed to be with the mentality and the drive that

¹⁰¹ L.V. Smith and Chossat 118

every soldier supposedly has. He writes, “On voit chaque nation dont le bord est rongé de massacres, qui s'arrache sans cesse du cœur de nouveaux soldats pleins de force et pleins de sang [...]”¹⁰² He describes his role and the role of his comrades as needing strength and blood in articulating the attributes of the soldier. While on the periphery of the nation corpses pile up, at its heart there are always new, fresh men ready to take the place of the dead, suggesting that the life force, the heart, of the nation is always strong due to the seemingly endless number of men fighting and dying.¹⁰³ The Great War, according to Mosse, reemphasized the stereotypes of masculinity that had been prevalent in the 19th-Century. This war “was an invitation to manliness.”¹⁰⁴ Barbusse well articulates through these characters the sense that the war was, as Mosse writes, “a test of courage, maturity, prowess that posed the question ‘are you a real man?’”¹⁰⁵ The culture of the time, which emphasized the masculinity of men in the role of the soldier is thus reflected in the need for these men to be “pleins de force et pleins de sang.” References to strength and blood refer both to the life that the soldiers need, and also to their likely death, as the strength and blood enable them to fight in battle, but also demonstrate their mortality.

While the warrior image ought to be how the soldier identifies himself, as well as how he ought to manifest his outward behaviors, the narrator describes how the soldiers actually see themselves in a very different way. He writes, “Je vois des ombres émerger

¹⁰² Barbusse 7

¹⁰³ While there obviously was not an endless supply of men to fight, the text here suggests that in the trenches, the numbers did seem to go on steadily as the corpses continued to pile up.

¹⁰⁴ Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality* 114

¹⁰⁵ Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality* 114

de ces puits latéraux, et se mouvoir, masses énormes et difformes: des espèces d'ours qui pataugent et grognent. C'est nous."¹⁰⁶ He then follows up with more detail; "On perçoit des figures, rougeoyantes ou livides, avec des salissures qui les balafrent, trouées par les veilleuses d'yeux brouillés et collés au bord, embroussaillées de barbes non taillées ou encrassées de poils non rasés."¹⁰⁷ Rather than preserve the figures of the fresh-faced youthful warrior full of force and vigor, ready to fight the enemy for the nation's sake, the experience of war has beaten them down; they are dirty, tired, and unkempt. They do not perceive themselves in the way the State defines the martially masculine warrior.

The men have no pride in how they appear; the trenches have taken that away from them. Rather than tall, robust bodies, theirs are more animal-like lumps. These men are, in this transition towards figures of animals, becoming, as Deleuze and Guattari might argue, deterritorialized. We can turn to this theory of deterritorialization through a becoming-animal to understand better the description of these men-turned-animal in the trenches. As Deleuze and Guattari explain, in this *becoming-animal*, one does not become animal to an end, but rather one exists in the continual process of becoming animal. Similarly, the Barbusse's characters are not quite fully animal, as they are still soldiers, but they are turning towards animalism in their behavior and through their living conditions. Deterritorialization from the human is thus never complete, as "il n'y a plus ni homme ni animal, puisque chacun déterritorialise l'autre, dans une conjonction de flux."¹⁰⁸ The situation pulls the men between the two modes of existence, leaving them

¹⁰⁶ Barbusse 11

¹⁰⁷ Barbusse 11

¹⁰⁸ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. *Kafka: pour une littérature mineure*. Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1975, 40.

without one set mode of subjectivity, deterritorialized. Although Barbusse's narrator describes the soldiers as bear-like, there is nothing of the fierceness of that animal in this description, but rather a lumbering mass of body and hair. They are thus confined to this middle ground of becoming animal. They clearly have no strength left; as they are "enterré au fond d'un éternel champ de bataille."¹⁰⁹ Though these men are alive, they are so entrenched in the battlefield, especially based on their dirty, unkempt bodies that they are practically already dead and buried. They are absolutely left in this in-between space of their *becoming*-. In being deterritorialized, they can never return to the human, and they can never fully become animal.¹¹⁰ They are in constant flux, while their very presence on the battlefield signals their death. According to Smith and Chossat in their writing about war literature generally and *Le feu* specifically, "rien ne hante davantage la nature humaine que la crainte de l'anéantissement du soi au travers de la mort du corps."¹¹¹ Arguably, the threat to the men's bodies warns of a potential threat to their human identity.

In Smith and Chossat's examination of war literature of the early 20th-Century, they investigate ways in which the soldier's body relates to his identity which help better articulate the soldier's deterritorialization. They explore two opposing perspectives regarding the body and identity. First, there is "une interprétation dualiste, selon laquelle l'identité peut exister indépendamment du corps. Cette approche dualiste tente de faire

¹⁰⁹ Barbusse 11

¹¹⁰ While this particular interpretation of deterritorialization and of becoming animal within Barbusse's story is quite negative, Deleuze and Guattari do not define these concepts as necessarily dehumanizing, or as a loss.

¹¹¹ L.V. Smith and Chossat 112

échec à l'anéantissement du soi au travers de la transcendance du corps."¹¹² Next, they examine an alternative approach, "une interprétation matérialiste, selon laquelle l'identité existe uniquement sous une forme physique. Autrement dit, la présence d'un corps est une condition nécessaire, même si elle est insuffisante, pour l'identité."¹¹³ Barbusse's narrator takes a closer body-identity stance, as he does not separate the man turned animal from the body he inhabits. While their bodies, to be sure, are to take on the war, they are not supposed to be taken over in this way. Rather than see them throw their bodies fully into battle, we first see their bodies resembling the filth of the trenches. They are not using their bodies as tools in war; rather, they are allowing their bodies to be overtaken *by* war in a passive way. Their regressive *becoming-animal* is thus passive, rather than active, or both active and passive. Barbusse's coarse descriptions of these soldiers show the discrepancy between the image of soldier identity and the soldier identity that they experience on the ground, in the battle.

Battle inevitably shifts their identity away from the image of martial masculinity.

The narrator describes his comrades more like animals than men,

[...] ils se jettent sur la nourriture et mangent, debout, accroupis, à genoux, assis sur un bouteillon ou un havresac tiré du puits où on couche, ou écroulés à même le sol, le dos enfoncé dans la terre, dérangés par les passants, invectivés et invectivant. À part ces quelques injures ou quolibets courants, ils ne disent rien, d'abord occupés tout entiers à avaler,

¹¹² L.V. Smith and Chossat 113

¹¹³ L.V. Smith and Chossat 113. For their full analysis, which does not address the dimensions of gender and sexuality in identity, see Smith and Chossat's paper entitled "Le corps et la survie d'une identité dans les écrits de guerre français."

la bouche et le tour de la bouche graisseux comme des culasses. Ils sont contents.¹¹⁴

In battle situations, these men are supposed to thrive, to show off their abilities to wage war and to prioritize the nation over their own lives. Yet the narrator shows how the very conditions that require this behavior turn them into animals, only wanting to get food into their bodies, reducing them to prioritizing the fulfillment of their basic survival needs rather than throwing themselves into danger for their country. Here we see the connection between their bodies and their identities—because of bodily needs, they lose some sense of a controlled, human identity to take on characteristics based on instinct. Their physical state influences their identity. Smith and Chossat identify such an impact specifically within Barbusse’s novel, and its connection to the position of the soldier within the conflict, “L’identité est transformée par le biais des déformations horribles que la guerre inflige au corps. L’individu survit de façon anonyme, en faisant partie de la narration historique victorieuse du progrès.”¹¹⁵ Identity, for this novel, remains anonymous because of the large scale of war.

To be sure, Smith and Chossat make an important point when indicating that identity is transformed through the violence of war. Barbusse does describe, through these characters, the anonymous quality of the figure of the soldier and this figure’s identity. The soldier is thus both anonymous and animal-like. Anonymity serves to emphasize the status of the animal as lacking in humanness, as an animal cannot have a discernible human identity. Smith and Chossat describe this moment in World War I

¹¹⁴ Barbusse 29

¹¹⁵ L.V. Smith and Chossat 118

when writing about *Le feu*, indicating that instead of an individual, self-driven identity, “la patrie offrait la transcendance au corps physique menacé, soit une compensation métaphysique pour un sacrifice physique. Le corps individuel devenait avant tout la carapace du soi, mobilisé pour servir la patrie. En effet, le corps appartenait plus à la patrie qu'à l'individu lui-même.”¹¹⁶ They argue that Barbusse’s novel reflects the way in which the soldiers’ bodies belonged largely to the nation rather than to themselves, the tension this command causes for the soldiers’ identity, and their attempts to free themselves of State expectations. This is how the characters articulate their relationship to the State, as desired by the State, all while attempting to reject this relationship through independence on the battlefield.

Barbusse’s characters question their roles and who they are as soldiers once they understand their position in the national conflict. The discrepancy between what a soldier should be and what he is thus enters into the discussion, and is no longer located only in the narration, but in the dialogue as well. Through the interactive nature of the discussion, certain characters examine their position as soldiers in the overall war effort. To be sure, the State wants the soldiers to see themselves as part of a larger unit helping the nation. However, within the larger context of the war, the soldiers see themselves as insignificant when they consider the large mass of land involved in the war, as well as the entire system of trenches and the soldiers living (and dying) in them.

¹¹⁶ L.V. Smith and Chossat 115

From the soldiers' calculations, they see that, "le front français n'est à peu près que la huitième partie du front de la guerre sur la surface du monde,"¹¹⁷ and one of the soldiers, Cocon, wonders, "Dans tout ça, tu vois ce qu'on est, nous autres... ?"¹¹⁸ Another soldier named Barque contributes, "C'est vrai, quand on y pense, qu'un soldat-ou même plusieurs soldats-ce n'est rien, c'est moins que rien dans la multitude, et alors on se trouve tout perdu, noyé, comme quelques gouttes de sang qu'on est, parmi ce déluge d'hommes et de choses."¹¹⁹ This sentiment reveals the scope of men involved in the conflict, and the insignificance of any given individual. While a soldier alone is vulnerable, with his unit he is much stronger, and yet that is not how Barque sees himself or his situation. In comparing his group to "quelques gouttes de sang," he uses a gruesome metaphor to show that their blood is insignificant within the larger context of the conflict. Their sacrifice and their potential loss of life (through loss of blood) are insignificant. Many men dying is significant, and considering the real war upon which the novel is based, the high number of casualties was relevant in its aftermath.¹²⁰ Yet through the medium of the novel, this one character recognizes that within the larger scale conflict of this war, in the midst of such intense slaughter, one individual soldier's death or even the death of a

¹¹⁷ Barbusse 32

¹¹⁸ Barbusse 33

¹¹⁹ Barbusse 33

¹²⁰ A spokesperson from the War Ministry in France made the official declaration of French military deaths due to World War I on December 26, 1918. The number provided, 1,385,000, included both the dead and the missing French military personnel, of which 1,140,000 had died. This total death figure includes colonial soldiers as well as the French foreign legion (Urlanis, B. *War and Population*. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1971, 58). To provide a point of comparison, the total deaths on all sides of the conflict in the Franco-Prussian War, which lasted from 1870-71, totaled 57,000 (Urlanis 56). The Napoleonic wars, which spanned ten years from 1805-1815, saw a total of 560,000 soldiers and officers killed on both sides (Urlanis 45). I would like to emphasize that the numbers I show here for the Napoleonic wars and the Franco-Prussian War includes casualties from all sides of the conflict, while the significantly higher number from World War I includes only French and Francophone soldiers, with over one million being French citizen military personnel.

small group of soldiers is insignificant. As a result of their death for the nation, their individual identities are thus swept up into the national identity, as soldiers for France. They are only remembered as such, rather than as distinct individuals.

Within the fictional realm of his novel, though, the characters have concrete identities in their names and voices, through which they express the way in which war erases these individual identities. Each one could see himself individually as irrelevant to the cause. This feeling of irrelevance introduces the sentiment of the futility of war. The soldier potentially sacrifices his life, the consequences of which are enormous to him, but his individual death does little in the end to help a nation. In sum, the death of one man is significant to him and his family, but overall matters little. War, then, brings together significant numbers of individually vulnerable men to create together a group which is ideally less vulnerable than any given man. While the unit as a whole is more than a sum of its parts, each piece, comprised of a human, has a low level of significance. In sum, the high number of soldiers increases the collective force of the unit while simultaneously highlighting the insignificance of the individual. The minor and minority position that each soldier inhabits, as demonstrated by Barque, reveals the importance of the myth of the soldier at war. This myth needs to glamorize and symbolically elevate the role of the individual soldier and the figure of the soldier, providing an image of masculinity that is appealing to emulate in order to give each player in the conflict a sense of having a stake in the success of the mission, outside of his own interest in staying alive. It is through this discrepancy that these soldiers, with the help of Barque, come to understand their role and their identity as soldiers. As individuals, they have discrete identities that do not

necessarily relate to masculinity, but as soldiers, their identities belong to the State, which imposes gender norms on these soldier identities. This normalization recalls a gendered version of Althusser's notion of interpellation—in being soldiers they are always-already martially masculine, at least in theory, though in practice, as these characters show, they maintain individual identities within the trench community.

In the vast space of war, where their number renders them close to insignificant, these soldiers come to recognize the contradictory obligation to one's fellow soldier and to oneself. They question the sense of a male community which is so important during this time as well as today. In spite of their disagreement with its basic principles, they reveal that they cannot help engaging in the communal outlook of the trenches. The men's discussion of this contradiction sheds light on the difficulty in reconciling the military notion of "band of brothers" with the individual desire to survive. The beliefs of the men at the front, according to the narrator, shift as the experience of war changes each soldier. The narrator finds that all that is left is "renoncement à comprendre, et renoncement à être soi-même; espérance de ne pas mourir et lutte pour vivre le mieux possible."¹²¹ What is at stake is the life of the individual, not the collective life of the unit. Continuing the narrator's perspective, the soldier Barque emphasizes that "il faut faire ce qu'on doit, oui, mais faut s'démerder."¹²² One of the characters, soldier Tulacque agrees, indicating that they have no choice but to look out for the individual, as "si tu t'démerdes pas, on l'fera pas pour toi, t'en fais pas."¹²³ Through their conversation, these

¹²¹ Barbusse 34-5

¹²² Barbusse 35

¹²³ Barbusse 35

soldiers shatter the myth of the identity of soldiers as wrapped up in the identity of the unit. Though these men confide in one another, what they confide is that ultimately, they cannot trust one another. The identity of the soldier, though outwardly one of camaraderie implicit in the structure of the military—they are officially grouped into units, rather than considered as individuals in the fight—is inwardly one of solitude and individualism. In death, they are remembered as a community. To maintain an individual identity, they must reject feelings of obligation to the community because common involvement in war means they must risk their lives. The individualism expressed by the soldiers indicates their priorities—instead of explicitly wanting to win the war, which necessitates a belief in the myth of camaraderie, they prefer to work for themselves in hopes of surviving.

This novel offers no tales of expressly glorified heroism, but rather it shows how the unit functions as a whole and how each individual functions alone. In their conversation highlighting the dynamic of these relationships, the men discuss how they cannot trust one another with their lives—yet by the very discussion they are demonstrating a certain level of trust in their fellow soldiers. Their identities as soldiers and men whose jobs it is to help each other, yet who also have an instinct to live, are at odds. It is easier to save your own life if you do not attempt to save someone else's.

The men make a clear distinction between the heroism of killing the enemy and that of saving a friend. In one instance of a humble tale of heroism, the narrator tells of another soldier, Lamuse, who saved wounded friends under fire. Lamuse refused to make a story of this moment, casually saying “J’pouvais pas les laisser comme ça. J’n’ai

pas d'mérite, puisque je n'pouvais pas faire autrement."¹²⁴ The group does not revere this action, as "Presque tous les gars de l'escouade ont quelque haut fait militaire à leur actif et, successivement, les croix de guerre se sont alignées sur leurs poitrines."¹²⁵ There is no fuss about their heroism. Thus while the men claim to look out for themselves, protesting that the notion of military brotherhood is a myth, it is in fact their own claims that are the myths, and there is frequent heroism through helping others in danger. In refusing to glorify it, though, these men do reject the construction of the heroic soldier, and instead reveal their own alternate meaning of heroism in war.

Barbusse's men thereby outwardly reject the option of potentially surviving as individuals, accepting instead the risk of dying in order to save the unit. They protest against the notion of individual anonymity in death by proclaiming their desire to work alone for survival, but then quietly do help others in need. The public glory of martial masculinity is of no allure here, as that fate inevitably means being forgotten in the end, lumped together with a group of collective heroes. In examining this aspect of the text alongside Céline's, we see that a sense of community is what gives the expectation—even if not fulfilled—of martial masculinity its strength. From within that expectation, even when outwardly rejected, heroism emerges. When strident individualism goes alongside a rejection of community in an environment that emphasizes martially masculine traits, the result is what we will see in my analysis of Céline's narrator, Bardamu, found in the second section of this chapter. He fully rejects any notion of

¹²⁴ Barbusse 38

¹²⁵ Barbusse 38

community as well as any notion of the myth of the hero. Whereas Barbusse's characters accept the possibility of heroism but do not emphasize it, Bardamu outwardly mocks it.

The men in the narrator's unit in Barbusse's *Le feu* articulate how they see themselves as a cohort through these simple acts of bravery, even though they downplay the heroism. They also distinguish themselves as a unique group by signaling those who are outsiders. They describe another group, the African soldiers fighting for the French army, as clearly distinct from themselves. Even though they are on the same side of the battle, and are meant to have the same goals in war, the racial element creates a sharp divide between the African and the French units. In a discussion of the character of these foreign men, the French soldiers frame the Africans as very different from themselves:

Et on rapporte des traits de Bicots: leur acharnement à l'assaut, leur ivresse d'aller à la fourchette, leur goût de ne pas faire quartier. On répète les histoires qu'ils racontent eux-mêmes volontiers, et tous un peu dans les mêmes termes et avec les mêmes gestes: ils lèvent les bras: "kam'rad, kam'rad"! Non, pas "kam'rad!" Et ils exécutent la mimique de la baïonnette qu'on lance devant soi, à hauteur du ventre, puis qu'on retire, d'en bas, en s'aidant du pied.¹²⁶

In referring to how ferocious these Africans are, the men are implying that they themselves are not as ferocious. Of course, the terms they use feed into the stereotype inspired by colonialism of the fierce savage, and this text provides no nuanced

¹²⁶ Barbusse 52

understanding of the figure of the African *tirailleurs*.¹²⁷ However, in showing how these soldiers see their African counterparts in strictly stereotypical terms, we can interpret how they view themselves to gain an impression of their own version of the figure of the white, French soldier. They stereotype Africans as a group, seeing these men as part of an extreme version of the military model of masculinity, while the image they have of themselves contradicts that very model. Continuing their comparison, Lamuse brings in the terms “hommes” and “soldats” as distinct from each other, contradicting the Napoleonic notion that all men should emulate soldierly behavior.

‘Au fond, [les Africains] sont de vrais soldats’. ‘Nous ne sommes pas des soldats, nous, nous sommes des hommes,’ dit le gros Lamuse. L'heure s'est assombrie et pourtant cette parole juste et claire met comme une lueur sur ceux qui sont ici, à attendre, depuis ce matin, et depuis des mois. Ils sont des hommes, des bonshommes quelconques arrachés brusquement à la vie. Comme des hommes quelconques pris dans la masse, ils sont ignorants, peu emballés, à vue bornée, pleins d'un gros bon sens, qui, parfois, déraile; enclins à se laisser conduire et à faire ce qu'on leur dit de faire, résistants à la peine, capables de souffrir longtemps. Ce sont de simples hommes qu'on a simplifiés encore, et dont, par la force des choses, les seuls instincts primordiaux s'accroissent: instinct de la conservation, égoïsme, espoir tenace de survivre toujours, joie de manger, de boire et de

¹²⁷ For an examination of critical analysis on race, stereotypes of masculinity within the military, and colonialism, including the work of Frantz Fanon, see Chapter two. Issues related to these questions of race are more relevant in Chapter two, which analyses texts that have a more significant focus on the colonial soldiers than does this chapter.

dormir. Par intermittences, des cris d'humanité, des frissons profonds, sortent du noir et du silence de leurs grandes âmes humaines.¹²⁸

This description frames the figure of the soldier in very simple terms, ones that show the basic, primitive quality of all humans, which echoes the stereotype of the African men, yet in this context refers specifically to the men serving in the trenches with the narrator. In framing the French group as men, rather than soldiers, and then describing themselves in these simple terms of gaining pleasure from eating, drinking, and sleeping, they comparatively imply that soldiers (as opposed to men) are super-humans who are not tempted by these simple pleasures of life. Soldiers are machines for fighting, while men want to enjoy life. The Africans are the soldier “machines” while the French soldiers see themselves only as men who happen to be playing the part of the soldier, regardless of the training they received. These men see themselves as less than true soldiers in the face of the stereotypically fierce Africans. Race thus shapes perceived identity.

So far, this analysis has focused on how the expectation of a soldier’s identity—as opposed to a civilian’s identity—is situated in the way these characters express their own sense of self, often in unclear ways that highlight their identities’ contradiction with what is expected of them. Yet, surely, a significant factor in any given identity is experience, and the soldier, at least the combat soldier, experiences moments of extreme violence that shape his identity. Barbusse’s narrator offers graphic depictions of violent moments, the experience of which no doubt has an impact on what it means to be a soldier and to identify as one. He writes:

¹²⁸ Barbusse 52-3

Besse a eu un morceau d'obus qui lui a traversé le ventre et l'estomac.

Barthélémy et Baubex ont été atteints à la tête et au cou. On a passé la nuit à cavalier au galop dans la tranchée, d'un sens à l'autre, pour éviter les rafales. Le petit Godefroy, tu le connais? Le milieu du corps emporté; il s'est vidé de sang sur place, en un instant, comme un baquet qu'on renverse: petit comme il était, c'était extraordinaire tout le sang qu'il avait: il a fait un ruisseau d'au moins cinquante mètres dans la tranchée.

Gougnard a eu les jambes hachées par des éclats. On l'a ramassé pas tout à fait mort. Ça, c'était au poste d'écoute. Moi, j'y étais de garde avec eux.

Mais quand c't'obus est tombé, j'étais allé dans la tranchée demander l'heure. J'ai retrouvé mon fusil, que j'avais laissé à ma place, plié en deux comme avec une main, le canon en tire-bouchon, et la moitié du fût en sciure. Ça sentait le sang frais à vous soulever le cœur.¹²⁹

Surely, experiencing this physical destruction inflicted on one's own body, or even seeing others, those you rely on, as victims, would shift your perception of self. Those who survive must face, through their comrades' fallen bodies, the possibility of the same fate in the future. Through this description (and others like it in the text), the emphasis that Barbusse's characters give to the importance of individual preservation makes sense—in a situation as physically dangerous as this, the vulnerability of the soldier is so intense that there is only so much that an individual can do to save himself, much less save a

¹²⁹ Barbusse 56-7

friend. It is the innate vulnerability of the soldier and the fear of loss that leads these men away from the nation's expectations of martial masculinity.

Vulnerability plays a key role in soldier identification. Not only is physical vulnerability a factor, but mental vulnerability is as well. The narrator can describe this scene because he witnessed it and survived. From this disturbingly striking description, we see from where his sense of futility comes. Soldiers need to look out for themselves, since they understand that it is impossible to save another if you yourself are killed while attempting the rescue. Therefore, even though heroism is important for the myth of martial masculinity, it is largely a myth because of the difficulty and the likely futility of heroism. Instead, these men identify with the futility of war rather than with its masculinized glory.

As men, soldiers must be solid, but Barbusse shows that their circumstances create anything but solid, fearless men. Situations of intense vulnerability wreak havoc on the image of a brave warrior, and the physically injured soldier is in a visibly vulnerable position.¹³⁰ The body of the soldier is in fact his most crucial weapon, whether it belongs to a fictional or real soldier. In a discussion of the near inevitability of getting wounded in battle, Barbusse's characters highlight the importance of the body: "Au commencement, dit Farfadet, je trouvais drôle quand j'entendais désirer la 'bonne blessure'. Mais tout de même, quoi qu'on puisse dire, tout de même, je comprends, maintenant qu'est la seule chose qu'un pauvre soldat puisse espérer qui ne soit pas

¹³⁰ See Chapter three for an analysis of the injured soldier and his relationship to masculinity.

fou.”¹³¹ Farfadet’s explanation of the shift in his way of thinking suggests that there are stages involved in the emphasis of the body of the soldier. I interpret this quotation to mean that the pre-trench soldier hopes to keep his body intact, and believes that this is possibility. Upon arrival in the trenches, and upon seeing the results of war from that perspective, the soldier understands the impossibility of leaving unscathed. His determination to live might take over, and thus his hope is to avoid death as well as intense pain or dismemberment, leading to the hope for “une bonne blessure.” Wounds to the body are inevitable. This “hope” to which the soldiers here refer tells us that they are fully aware of what their body means in war, and how that meaning shifts in the space of battle compared to outside of it. The hope of the “good injury” signals the soldier’s susceptibility and as such, we see how inevitable vulnerability is in martial masculinity through the vulnerability of the body and the necessary connection between the soldier’s body and his job. The body is thus crucial to, rather than separate from, the soldier’s identity.

The importance of the soldier’s body to his identity means that a soldier in battle will see his body differently from a soldier not in battle, who will see his body differently from a civilian. This ability of a soldier to see his body differently depends on his recognizing his own vulnerability, which according to Butler is an important factor in coming to terms with one’s own identity.¹³² Butler emphasizes the existence of a common vulnerability that is tied to identity. She writes, “Although I am insisting on referring to a common human vulnerability, one that emerges with life itself, I also insist

¹³¹ Barbusse 64

¹³² Judith Butler. *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*. New York: Verso, 2006. 30.

that we cannot recover the source of this vulnerability: it precedes the formation of ‘I.’”¹³³ Vulnerability, for her, exists in everybody, yet she does not deny that some bodies exist in situations that are more vulnerable than others.¹³⁴ She adds, “violence is surely a touch of the worst order, a way a primary human vulnerability to other humans is exposed in its most terrifying way, a way in which we are given over, without control, to the will of another, a way in which life itself can be expunged by the willful action of another.”¹³⁵ There is a helplessness in this vulnerability, and a potential lack of control, specifically with regard to “the willful action of another.” This helplessness implies a need for help, and an inability to benefit from it—this need also contributes to the sense of vulnerability. Barbusse’s soldiers recognize this helplessness, and hope for the best outcome for their vulnerable bodies. As soldiers, they are not supposed to see themselves as vulnerable, thus their acknowledgment of vulnerability sets them outside of the martially masculine identity.

Barbusse uses his narrator to transfer some of this vulnerability to the reader; in fact, he comments on the subject matter according to research done by Arthur Marwick, historian and war scholar. Marwick cites Barbusse: “My book on the War is not new, oh no! It is concerned with describing a squad of soldiers during the various phases and vicissitudes of the campaign. It is not made for comfortable reading.”¹³⁶ Due to its graphic nature, and perhaps given that I am working on this in the aftermath of a terrible news cycle (Boston Marathon bombing, ricin-laced letters to the President, an explosion

¹³³ Butler, *Precarious Life* 31

¹³⁴ Butler, *Precarious Life* 31

¹³⁵ Butler, *Precarious Life* 28-9

¹³⁶ Barbusse quoted in Marwick, Arthur. “The Great War in Print and Paint: Henri Barbusse and Fernand Léger.” *Journal of Contemporary History* 37.2 (2002): 509-521, 514.

at a fertilizer plant, and the Senate defeat of a reasonable gun regulation law), this text was particularly difficult to read. I found it impossible to read it without thinking of the very real bodies of actual individuals who have previously fought and who are currently fighting in wars. Marwick notes the nature of this novel, using Barbusse's text to "illuminate what [he has] already referred to as 'the all-pervasiveness' of that most horrific, disruptive and traumatic of wars."¹³⁷ He notes, "the descriptions of dismembered and rotting bodies are graphic, the separate episodes and the portraits of the individual soldiers vivid. The novel spoke directly to readers at the time and speaks directly to readers today."¹³⁸ The novel contains a "distinctive mix of supernaturalism and ultra-realism,"¹³⁹ which, combined with the author having written it while experiencing war, made it impossible and yet, conversely, imperative, for the literary scholar to examine and write about Barbusse's novel as a fictional text, rather than a testimony or an act of witnessing. While this novel does offer an image of the identity of the soldier in combat, it also offers insight into a collective, brutal identity of the world, signaling that the propensity to bloodshed, while not precisely the same from place to place and time to time, does not vary significantly.

Due to the powerful nature of the images in Barbusse's text, the author uses his narrator to bring the reader as close as a reader can get to the scene. In writing this text, Barbusse made it possible to show just a small piece of the emotional, psychic vulnerability that actual soldiers might have felt during the war. In spite of being

¹³⁷ Marwick 510

¹³⁸ Marwick 509

¹³⁹ Marwick 521

technically a work of fiction, given the context in which it was written and its graphic nature, it would go against Barbusse's project not to take away a connection to real-life (non-fictional) emotion from the narrative. The men in Barbusse's novel reject the power promised to them by the status of martial masculinity, seeing instead, through the violence of the war, their own powerlessness, which martial masculinity could never overcome. Their own version of masculinity, which is distinct from the versions found in other novels and films that I discuss in this dissertation, Céline especially, takes into account and is aware of the dangers of the State's version of martial masculinity. While they do describe acts of heroism, they interpret these acts as inevitable rather than heroic. Thus, I would argue that humility is an important means of identifying the way in which these characters understand masculinity in the trenches.

Within the depictions of graphic war violence that bring to mind real world violence, the novel and its characters serve to show the ways in which the State's required soldierly identity and the individual's identity exist side by side in the trenches. The men in this community see the difference between the two, and by communicating their fears to one another, they are able to negotiate when to embody a soldierly, martially masculine identity and when to acknowledge their own vulnerable identity. During their conversations, these men endure transformative reactions to their situation, and this text articulates gendered identity within a process of transformation. According to Butler, "gender is in no way a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts proceed; rather, it is an identity tenuously constituted in time."¹⁴⁰ These characters

¹⁴⁰ Judith Butler. "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory." *Theatre Journal* 40.4 (1988): 519-531, 519.

demonstrate an evolution in the way they see their own identities as soldiers within a community of soldiers, identities tenuously based on their own survival. While they must engage with the State's version of their own identity, these men are able to see themselves as distinct from their "soldier identity" through their engagement with their community. While nationalism, according to Mosse's description, dictates a firm type of masculine gender identity, which war solidifies, Barbusse's characters reveal instead that war and brotherhood are precisely what shift their perception of their own identities, allowing for the emergence and the affirmation of singular selves in the face of potential anonymity and annihilation.

Louis-Ferdinand Céline's *Voyage au bout de la nuit*

During the first half of the 20th-Century, fascism—an authoritarian form of government that prioritizes the nation over the individual and does not accept any type of disagreement from its citizens—had a huge influence on Europe as a whole, affecting certain nations more than others. While fascism arguably influenced life, politics, and governments in countries like Italy and Germany more significantly, there were elements of it in France that have left traces in some of the literature. This type of ideology appeared most notably in Céline's *Voyage au bout de la nuit*, where the actions and words of the narrator, Bardamu, serve to question the French expectation of martial masculinity by taking on its extreme, violent, fascist-like version. This novel is set initially at the onset of World War I and in the trenches of that conflict, then follows the narrator, Bardamu, in his global travels during the post-war period. From these shifts in

locations, we see the impact that the experience of the trenches had on this character's methods of navigating through his life due to the continuity of violence from the trenches in his post-war world.

Though I am not arguing that this is a fascist novel, it does have proto-fascist themes. William Empson, a literary critic writing at the time of the publication of *Voyage* in 1935, noted that even though this novel could be read as a proletarian work, this type of analysis could only be done once you removed the author "as a man ripe for fascism."¹⁴¹ Were this criticism made after the publication of his pamphlets or after Céline's escape to Denmark and conviction as a collaborator, there would be little reason to look specifically to *Voyage* to find traces of right-wing tendencies. Given, however, that this critique was made before Céline even wrote his pamphlets, I believe it speaks to the underlying fascist themes in this novel.

David Carroll, an important literary critic of Céline's work overall, writes in his book on literary fascists that he did not initially plan to include Céline in his study because he "was never [as] directly involved in political journalism as the other intellectuals and writers [Carroll] intended to study."¹⁴² This lack of direct and admitted political involvement on the part of Céline might indicate it inappropriate to examine his work alongside a proto-fascist group like the Freikorps. However, upon reflection, Carroll did include Céline in his analysis because while "he may be the most exaggerated and least typical of the literary fascist, [...] he is the most poetic and the most literary

¹⁴¹ William Empson. *Some Versions of Pastoral*. New York: New Directions Publishing Corporation, 1974, 11.

¹⁴² David Carroll. *French Literary Fascism: Nationalism, Anti-Semitism, and the Ideology of Culture*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995, 13.

[...].”¹⁴³ Céline’s style is particular, especially when considering a potential difference between “his art and his anti-Semitism.”¹⁴⁴ According to Carroll, critics treat the novels “as being radically different in style, form, and effect from his anti-Semitic pamphlets [...] as if his anti-Semitism ended where his art began, even in the pamphlets themselves.”¹⁴⁵ It seems then that there is conflict between the awe at Céline’s revolutionary style and the disgust at his ideology. Carroll writes of Céline’s style that

No matter how ‘spontaneous’ his writing might seem, no matter how much it might seem as if he wrote without literary pretensions or style, Céline always insisted that his writing was rhetorical and poetic in the strongest sense, a working on language to produce powerful effects. He was especially interested in the *rhetorical effect* of spontaneous, unreflective—that is, for him—purely poetic language and authentic, unmediated emotion.¹⁴⁶

For Céline, it was the style that took precedence over the content, as “Céline argued that he was never really an ideologue but rather ‘a stylist,’ a *writer* not a political militant.”¹⁴⁷ To be sure, his style does create a certain tone, one of spontaneity mixed with the narrator’s anxiety due to the heavy use of ellipses. This new literary style, though, does not need to be divorced from the content. The anxiety revealed in the ellipses speaks to the gruesome and violent content of the text. It is precisely his ability to reveal this

¹⁴³ Carroll 14

¹⁴⁴ Carroll 180

¹⁴⁵ Carroll 180

¹⁴⁶ Carroll 181. Author’s emphasis

¹⁴⁷ Carroll 181. Author’s emphasis

anxiety through writing that contributed to the development of the war novel genre.

Céline's writing shows that his character sees the world around him as unimaginably and constantly violent, which serves to demonstrate the ways in which war can follow a soldier well after the conflict has officially ended, thereby creating a model for a literary war genre that expresses the continuation of war trauma.

The literary scholar Eamon Maher, whose focus is on cultural theory and French Catholicism, argues that Céline demonstrates his disgust with war and everything surrounding it "through the development of a style that breaks with all literary norms."¹⁴⁸ Another literary critic with a focus on geography, José Luis Romanillos, describes the "pessimism and disgust" of Céline's narrative as "a kind of nightmarish travel writing."¹⁴⁹ It is through the rejection of literary norms and the narrator's disturbed interpretation of the world around him that I use this novel to examine gender identity as it intersects with the identity that war imposes on its participants. Bardamu's way of expressing his gendered and sexual identity serves to question the expectation of martial masculinity as a whole by presenting it in an extreme form. Fascist governments wanted to regulate gender roles and heavily emphasized masculinity in male citizens. As Connell notes, fascism is a prime example of hegemonic, or dominant, masculinity,

In gender terms, fascism was a naked reassertion of male supremacy in societies that had been moving towards equality for women. To accomplish this, fascism promoted new images of hegemonic masculinity,

¹⁴⁸ Eamon Maher. "War and Rebellion in the Work of Louis-Ferdinand Céline and Sebastian Barry." *War of the Words: Literary Rebellion in France and Ireland*. Ed. E. Maher and E. O'Brien. Rennes: TIR, 2010. 199-212, 200.

¹⁴⁹ José Luis Romanillos. "Nihilism and modernity: Louis-Ferdinand Céline's *Journey to the end of the night*." *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 10.1111 (2013): 1-12, 2.

glorifying irrationality (the ‘triumph of the will’, thinking with ‘the blood’) and the unrestrained violence of the frontline soldier.¹⁵⁰

Fascism emphasized male brutality, and in doing so, it “marked the apex of the stereotype of masculinity, virility, courage, and aggressiveness”.¹⁵¹ In Italy, Mussolini tried to create a new model of society, bred under fascism.¹⁵² Benadusi quotes a “well-known jurist” of the time, Giuseppe Maggiore, on this link between masculinity and fascism: “Fascism is male [...] In short, Fascism arouses virility against any sort of effeminate-ness or weakness of spirit. [...] Is there anything more masculine than that?”¹⁵³ The motivation to maintain an image of virility militarized men in these environments, as these cultures rejected anyone who did not conform to these ideals.¹⁵⁴ Faced with the prospect of societal rejection, incentive to conform was high.

Combined with this emphasis on virility, fascism also often articulated a complete distrust of women. German sociologist and literary scholar Klaus Theweleit analyzes this distrust well in his book, *Male Fantasies*, in which he examines the pre-World War II German pseudo-military group, the Freikorps. Writer, critic, and political activist Barbara Ehrenreich describes these men as “soon-to-be fascist personnel.”¹⁵⁵ Within the context of Theweleit’s study, this group’s influence spanned from 1914 to 1945, as they “were first soldiers in the regular army, then irregulars serving the cause of domestic

¹⁵⁰ Connell, *Masculinities* 193

¹⁵¹ Benadusi 30

¹⁵² Benadusi 13

¹⁵³ Benadusi 29

¹⁵⁴ Benadusi 30

¹⁵⁵ Barbara Ehrenreich. "Forward." Theweleit, Klaus. *Male Fantasies: Volume 1: women floods bodies history*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987. ix-xvii, x.

repression, and finally Nazis,”¹⁵⁶ with a primary focus on the interwar period. This group, arguably, had a heavy influence on the rise of the Nazis and of Fascism in Germany.¹⁵⁷ Theweleit portrays this group’s enactment of hegemonic masculinity (though he does not use this expression) and their fear of women through an analysis of both their personal letters and the novels they wrote at the time. Ehrenreich describes the Freikorps in the book’s preface to the English translation as

the volunteer armies that fought, and to a large extent, triumphed over, the revolutionary German working class in the years immediately after World War I [...] Hired by the socialist Chancellor Ebert to bring order to revolutionary Germany in 1918 [...] the Freikorps became roaming, largely autonomous armies each commanded by its own charismatic leader. Between 1918 and 1923, they fought Polish communists and nationalists, the Russian Red Army and Latvian and Estonian nationalists in the Baltic region, and the German working class throughout Germany.¹⁵⁸

To the Freikorps, “women [...] appear as agents of destruction”.¹⁵⁹ This mistrust and hatred of women provides an opening through which to examine Bardamu and the Freikorps side-by-side—especially given that the novel was set during the period framing Theweleit’s analysis of the Freikorps, from World War I into the interwar period. This analysis of the Freikorps’ soon-to-be fascist ideology reveals the similarity of

¹⁵⁶ Ehrenreich x

¹⁵⁷ Ehrenreich x

¹⁵⁸ Ehrenreich ix.

¹⁵⁹ Klaus Theweleit. *Male Fantasies Volume 1: women floods bodies history*. Trans. Stephen Conway. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987, 63.

Bardamu's personal mode of existence to fascist ideology, largely on the basis of his gender identity. Though Bardamu never suggests anything explicit about fascism's ideology, his way of existing during the war and especially afterwards suggests that a large part of his identity exists in terms that, while are not precisely in line with fascist modes of masculinity, are adjacent to them.

Both Bardamu and the Freikorps possess modes of sexuality that align with a fascist ideology though their sense of attraction and disgust. Women, for the Freikorps and other fascist groups, are a distraction to their main identity and their main purpose, which is that of a soldier protecting the nation. These groups believe that entire military units can be defeated due to the tempting presence of women.¹⁶⁰ Theweleit found in his research that these men frequently represented women as “threatening, enervating, indecent, or aggressive,” interrupting men in the middle of battle because of the women's sexual urges.¹⁶¹ When a man succumbs to a woman, “there will be literally nothing left of him.”¹⁶² Women outside of the maternal stereotype were a dangerous presence. The predominant image of a sexual and physically aggressive woman is the woman of the proletariat. The Freikorps describe her as a “monster, as a beast,” “shameless [...] a whore.”¹⁶³ This characterization came from the Freikorps' belief that these proletarian women were “threatening, because, among other reasons, they are not virgins. The sexual experience that nationalist soldiers sense in them seems to release a particularly

¹⁶⁰ Theweleit 63

¹⁶¹ Theweleit 64

¹⁶² Theweleit 65

¹⁶³ Theweleit 68

powerful fear.”¹⁶⁴ They do not temper their description: seeing a woman’s sexual experience is an all-encompassing threat to these men. Theweleit gives a brief summary of this problem, writing, “*erotic male-female relationship—violent, unfeeling woman—threat to the man—dirt, vulgarity—prostitution—proletarian woman—communism.*”¹⁶⁵

This quotation provides the vocabulary that these men associate with threatening female sexuality, which they link to communism, one of the worst enemies of the Freikorps.

The Freikorps soldier cannot feel masculine in the face of such an intense, and as they perceive it, destructive sexuality, as they become less dominant in contrast. To maintain a martially masculine identity, they believe they must avoid women’s supposed temptations and manipulations. Rather than men being responsible for their own martially masculine identity, then, women are responsible for having the ability to take it away, revealing a weakness within martial masculinity.

In Céline’s *Voyage*, Bardamu’s view of women is similar to that of the Freikorps. He feels equally threatened by them. He reveals his fear of women, though, not in explicit terms, but through his interpretation of war. He says, “Je venais de découvrir d’un coup la guerre tout entière. J’étais dépuclé. Faut être à peu près seul devant elle comme je l’étais à ce moment-là pour bien la voir la vache, en face et de profil.”¹⁶⁶ This experience, as Bardamu describes it, necessarily leads to a transformation. War, like a woman, takes a man’s virginity, the very symbol of innocence. The man is no longer the same after the bloodshed of war, and Bardamu sees this experience as similar to the first sexual contact, thereby relating war to sexuality and the transformative experience of

¹⁶⁴ Theweleit 68

¹⁶⁵ Theweleit 70. Author’s emphasis

¹⁶⁶ Céline 14.

“becoming” a man, as explained by Forth and Taithe. War creates a shift in a man’s identity, in the way he sees himself, just as a first sexual experience would. By drawing the comparison between war and women, Bardamu frames women as violent and aggressive and he does so in explicitly sexual terms. As for the Freikorps, female sexuality is threatening. Women, just like war, have the power to conquer him by reducing him to a vulnerable state. He acknowledges war and the loss of virginity both as intensely vulnerable and transformative moments. In this transformation, through the de-virginization of war, he must claim a new identity. No longer a war virgin, Bardamu’s self-image shifts. Through his experience with female sexuality and the way in which he connects this sexuality to war, he sees war in a new, more honest way—“en face et de profil,” and this revelation of war, like the loss of virginity, cannot be undone. War has permanently altered him.

What is particularly interesting here concerning Bardamu’s identity as a soldier is his discussion of male virginity. He emphasizes its importance as a status normally reserved for women. Cultures have long emphasized the preservation of female virginity over male virginity, yet Bardamu frames the loss of his virginity through war as negative, in a manner similar to interpretations of the loss of female virginity. By viewing war as a loss of virginity, Bardamu demonstrates the significance of war as a rite of passage for men. Masculinity and masculine identity (rather than male identity, which relates more specifically to biology) requires proof. According to Butler, the performativity of gender occurs through “acts, gestures, and desire.”¹⁶⁷ These “acts, gestures, enactments, generally constructed, are performative in the sense that the essence or identity that they

¹⁶⁷ Judith Butler. *Gender Trouble*. Cornwall, Great Britain: Routledge, 2006, 185.

otherwise purport to express are *fabrications* manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means.”¹⁶⁸ Gender is thus performed externally though the body and through discourse, meaning that gender is not an internal, biological factor. War thus serves as this external way of performing masculinity.

War can be the ultimate test and performance of masculine identity, mainly through putting the body at risk. The cultural historian and critic Leo Braudy writes of the important cultural relationship between war and masculine identity, indicating that typically, war is how men become men, it is a “prime place to define oneself as a man.”¹⁶⁹ Conversely, Bardamu, though admitting the power of war over him, frames this power as a feminization of men, rather than a way to become “a real man.” The performative power of war is for Bardamu what Butler references (“acts, gestures, and desire”), but rather than demonstrating a male gender identity here, a more specifically feminine identity emerges through this emphasis on virginity.

It is thus through an aspect of his sexed body (or his sexuality) that he finds this femininity within himself. Virginity is a cultural trope that works to identify both sexuality and gender. It is primarily feminized as a virtue, speaking to the way in which it is gendered, while at the same time, it is undeniably related to one’s sexuality and sexual experiences. In referencing his loss of virginity—“J’étais dépuçelé”—Bardamu imposes a very specific cultural trope of a female sexed body on his identity, especially since his phrasing does not suggest that he was in charge of this loss of virginity, but rather, it was done to him.

¹⁶⁸ Butler, *Gender Trouble* 185. Author’s emphasis

¹⁶⁹ Leo Braudy. *From Chivalry to Terrorism: War and the Changing Nature of Masculinity*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003, xv.

With this metaphor of virginity brought on by the experience of the body at war, then, Bardamu feminizes the soldier (in terms that are both gendered and sexualized), which goes in direct opposition to the intention of war, or rather, what is required of men to wage war—masculinity. He places warring men (or at least, newly warring men) in this feminized loss of virginity, symbolically weakening them.

Bardamu's fear of war works as an important contrast to the Freikorps, who revel in its destructiveness. Though both Bardamu and the Freikorps fear and mistrust women, the Freikorps avoid them while Bardamu seeks them out, perhaps to compensate for his aversion to war, a sentiment which the Freikorps do not share. Rather, he brings women into his life, thereby demonstrating his desire to show his dominance over their threatening presence. This potential for dominance would serve to compensate for the weakening influence war had on his masculinity. For Bardamu, as for the Freikorps, women and the sex and sexuality that inevitably accompany them create violence. This brutality draws them both in, but they value it in different contexts. The Freikorps "look for ecstasy not in embraces, but in explosions, in the rumbling of bomber squadrons or in brains being shot to flames...it is at the front, not in the bed, that any future encounters will take place."¹⁷⁰ This quotation shows veneration of murderous acts, and a shift in arousal. This shift, in fact, was common for soldiers in World War I. In an examination of sexuality and war, Jason Crouthamel, a historian whose work centers on Germany, gender, and sexuality, recounts the observations of World War I physician Paul Plaut,

¹⁷⁰ Theweleit 41

who noted that many men “became sexually aroused in combat.”¹⁷¹ The violent act stands for the sexual act.

Given the sexualized nature of aggression in war and Bardamu’s comparison between war and a loss of virginity, we see the connection that Bardamu makes between sex and death. While the soldiers are supposed to embody the image of war hero, Bardamu embodies the exact opposite. He then needs to create a new scenario in which he regains power, which he is able to do after the war.¹⁷² He maintains a violent spirit, similar to the Freikorps who are constantly emphasizing hostility outside of the bounds of war, through several means. His relationship with Lola, a young American in Paris, shows this aggression, creating a link between violence outside of war and sexual violence against women. He fights with Lola as a way of gaining control over bodies after being in the war-space, where violence had control over *his* body. Bardamu describes the body of Lola thus: “Elle allait et venait donc à travers la pièce Lola, un peu déshabillée et son corps me paraissait tout de même encore désirable. Un corps luxueux c’est toujours un viol possible, une effraction précieuse, directe, intime dans le vif de la richesse, de luxe, et sans reprise à craindre.”¹⁷³ He sees the possibility of destroying something beautiful, in this case the body of a beautiful woman, by means of a specifically sexual violence. Opposite violence in war, where Bardamu is powerless because of enemy attempts to kill him, he has no fear of reprisal from Lola, making her a safe target to reclaim his own power.

¹⁷¹ Jason Crouthamel. "Male Sexuality and Psychological Trauma: Soldiers and Sexual Disorder in World War I and Weimar Germany." *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 17.1 (2008): 60-84, 69.

¹⁷² In Chapter four, I examine in more detail masculinities outside of the trenches in other novels and films.

¹⁷³ Céline 212

Through the idea of rape, Bardamu reduces Lola's body to an object. He uses sexual brutality to show male power. Rape brings Lola's body down to Bardamu's level, and his need to bring her down suggests that he feels inferior to her. Bardamu does not self-identify in a positive way, but through this fantasy of physical domination over Lola, he attempts to regain the masculine status he lost through the loss of his virginity to war. Domination is a way in which an individual can assert his (or her) masculinity;¹⁷⁴ thus even with just the thought of sexual violence and dominance over Lola's body, Bardamu emphasizes a martially masculine identity, at least for his own understanding of himself. After feeling helpless because of the bloodshed of the war, he uses violence to see himself as powerful. Richard Golson, a scholar who studies fascism in France and Céline, writes on Céline's anti-Semitic pamphlets and the way which he "employs the strategy of victim-turned-victimizer to justify and mobilize the persecution of the Jews"¹⁷⁵ in these writings. In this scene with Lola, Céline's character acts in a similar way, shifting his victimhood from war onto Lola, thereby making himself the victimizer, and more powerful by comparison. Bardamu, a Frenchman suffering from the defeat of his country, understands the United States as a nation that is beginning to symbolize world power. Seeing the body of Lola, an American, as a body to conquer with aggression, he tries to recuperate not only the loss he suffered personally because of the destruction of war but the nation's loss as well.

France as a country is coded as a specifically female character in stories and mythmaking about this war. France's "femininity" also factors into Bardamu's identity

¹⁷⁴ Connell, *Masculinities* 67

¹⁷⁵ Richard J. Golson. "Drieu, Céline: French Fascism, Scapegoating, and the Price of Revelation." *Contagion: Journal of Violence, Mimesis, and Culture* 1 (1994): 172-183, 178.

shift due to his loss of innocence. Bardamu understands France as a female victim who is nevertheless complicit in his loss of innocence because of her status as a victim to the German aggressors. She needs the brave French soldier to save her.¹⁷⁶ Due to the victimization of female "France," the French soldier loses his innocence in war. In France's characterization as a woman, her guilt and complicity implicated in the loss of Bardamu's innocence, Bardamu comes to blame all women for his position in the violent space of war. The idea of rape and the takeover of Lola's body both serve as retribution for the way that France, by being at war, took away Bardamu's "virginity." After the war stripped him of his virginity, and therefore of his power, Lola serves as a way for Bardamu to regain sexual prowess—and power, as he says that she is "complaisante au sexe."¹⁷⁷ The sex metaphor thus serves to take away power (when related to war) and reinstate it (when related to a woman). Lola's presence, company, and willingness for sex thus remasculinizes Bardamu after the war emasculated and feminized him through the taking of his virginity.

In an article discussing the image of women in European novels of the 20th-Century, Sofia Ahlberg, a literary scholar who focuses on gender, writes that Céline's representation of women serves to "compensate for the inadequacies (real and imagined) felt by many Europeans during and after the World Wars."¹⁷⁸ The thought of raping Lola's body therefore reveals the main character's effort to show his own power in order to deny the failures that have become so obvious to him from the experience and the

¹⁷⁶ Céline 86

¹⁷⁷ Céline 52

¹⁷⁸ Sophia Ahlberg. "Scenes of Instruction: Representations of the American Girl in European Twentieth-Century Literature." *Journal of Modern Literature* 33.3 (2010): 64-77, 68.

trauma of war. Bardamu continues to endure the psychological cruelty of the defeat in the war, and he manifests this suffering in his attitude towards women and his desire to conquer them. Through this desire, he attempts to place himself in the position of Connell's hegemonic masculinity, the dominant form amongst masculine and feminine identities. Due to the parallels between this type of masculinity and fascism, we see Bardamu's connection with that ideology in his attempt to dominate Lola. Bardamu's failure is that he, specifically concerning his lack of action and negative attitudes about war, is one of those men who do not meet the standards of war. Most significantly, he does not believe in the myth of the hero, writing "Lâche ou courageux, cela ne veut pas dire grand-chose. Lapin ici, héros là-bas, c'est le même homme, il ne pense pas plus ici que là-bas."¹⁷⁹ Bardamu completely refuses any notion of heroism in war, writing that the hero and the coward are the same man. It is clear, however, that this is not Bardamu's sole attitude. Instead, he is cynical of the entire project, and of the possibility that anyone would sacrifice for another. This interpretation of heroism is clearly distinct from the version provided by Barbusse's characters. All reject its emphasis, but do so in different ways.

As we see through Lola's presence in the novel, contrary to the fully fascist Freikorps, Bardamu brings women into his life. However, he does so for hateful purposes, thus maintaining some of the Freikorps ideological connection to a masculine identity that rejects women but maintains strict heterosexuality. Julie Kristeva describes how Céline himself views the feminine, a description that evokes both how the Freikorps

¹⁷⁹ Céline 83

see women and how Céline's narrator treats them. According to Kristeva, Céline sees women as

sauvage[s], obscène[s] et menaçante[s]. Leur pouvoir abject est néanmoins tenu à l'écart par le retournement de la vision apeurée qui donne en même temps, de ce pouvoir, l'image d'une déchéance, de la misère et du masochisme insensé [...] cette-féminité-là n'en est pas moins dans une situation de démon déchu qui ne trouve d'être que par sa référence à l'homme.¹⁸⁰

Kristeva defines the abject as the opposition between the subject and the object, or between the self and the other, and the feeling of repulsion that occurs due to this opposition. She specifically refers to what happens when a human encounters a corpse as creating a sense of abjection.¹⁸¹ Kristeva argues that for Céline, the woman is an accomplice in abjection through her abject power. She destroys, and yet without man, she does not exist. Céline created this woman, according to Kristeva. He wrote in this abject space, since, "Céline, lui, parle du lieu même de cette horreur, il s'y compromet, il est dedans."¹⁸² Céline's world is entrenched in a fascination with the abject.¹⁸³ In the

¹⁸⁰ Julia Kristeva. *Pouvoirs de l'horreur: Essai sur l'abjection*. Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1980, 196.

¹⁸¹ Kristeva 9-11

¹⁸² Kristeva 182

¹⁸³ In the presence of the abject in Bardamu's world, we see a connection to the animal-like soldiers in Barbusse, as there is a certain abjection to the soldiers' actions. In their effort to eat, they are reduced to the abject. The main difference, however, is that it was Bardamu who seemed more to seek out the abject, whereas these men are more sympathetic, having found themselves in a situation which reduces them to the abject. Bardamu's proximity to the abject is voluntary. Céline's method of storytelling leans towards the narrator dehumanizing others through his attitude, as revealed by his rhetoric, while Barbusse's emphasizes the way in which war is to blame for the dehumanization of soldiers, due to the conditions of war combined with the insignificance of each fighting

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The main difference, however, is that it was Bardamu who seemed more to seek out the abject, whereas Barbusse's men are more sympathetic, having found themselves in a situation which reduces them to the abject. As novels, Céline's method of storytelling leans towards the narrator dehumanizing others through his attitude, as revealed by his rhetoric, while Barbusse's emphasizes the way in which war is to blame for the dehumanization of soldiers, due to the conditions of war combined with the insignificance of each fighting individual. Céline's narrative revels in the abject, while Barbusse's points to the helplessness of the soldiers within the abject space of war, but does not endorse their abjection. Céline's fascination exists mainly through linking sexual themes with themes of death, and through this connection, he fetishizes the abject.

Similarly, Bardamu fetishizes women by *making* them abject, revealing the fear they instill in him. The Freikorps, comparatively, see women as abject, but their reaction towards these women is one of rejection. For the Freikorps and other fascist groups, heterosexuality was important as a means to reject homosexuality, but the culture did not allow an active heterosexuality where men pursued and desired women. Rather, to accomplish the goals of militarization, the soldier (and civilian) exists in a homosocial—a same-sex, non-sexual—group. Fascism emphasizes these friendships between men,

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encouraging and facilitating meetings of large groups of men for social gatherings outside of war “where the rhythm of armies and crowds beats like one huge heart.”¹⁸⁴ Male friend groups were important in and out of war, allowing the men to see war as positive due to the bonds that it established. Gender and queer theorist Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick examines the significance of ‘homosociality’ specifically concerning ‘male homosocial desire,’ the male bonds that serve to oppress women by promoting men’s interests.¹⁸⁵ Sedgwick’s work, similar to that of Judith Surkis, notes the “‘obligatory heterosexuality’ [that] is built into male-dominated kinship systems” as well as the homophobia that accompanies this heterosexuality.¹⁸⁶ Male homosocial desire is filled with contradictions—within patriarchies, men must further the interest of other men, but they must also maintain a rigid view of anything leaning towards the sexual, even though the lines between the sexual and the non-sexual are often variable and easily misrepresented.¹⁸⁷ This potential for fluidity between the sexual and the non-sexual is a significant contradiction within all-male groups, such as combat units.

It is through such a notion of homosociality that Bardamu again diverges from fascist ideology. Having no homosocial group and very little of the homosocial contact that fascism encourages through which to re-live war—he only has one friend—Robinson, Bardamu sees the war and its associated trauma only in his relationship with women. A solid homosocial group serves to emulate war in peace-time, thus channeling

¹⁸⁴ Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality* 174

¹⁸⁵ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick. "Introduction From *Between Men*." *Feminisms: An Anthology Of Literary Theory And Criticism*. Ed. Robyn R. Warhol and Diane Price Herndl. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2007. 507-531, 508.

¹⁸⁶ Sedgwick 509

¹⁸⁷ Sedgwick 518

that aggression into appropriate peacetime activities, like sports.¹⁸⁸ Without that male friendship group and the positive view of war that friendship could provide through friendly and regulated competition, Bardamu instead releases the violence left by war on women. His sexual identity and his corporeal identity are always under some kind of threat, either by women and their sexuality, or by war and its ability to destroy him. He articulates this threat thus: “Les huiles ont fini par me laisser tomber et j’ai pu sauver mes tripes, mais j’étais marqué à la tête et pour toujours.”¹⁸⁹ Even though he is alive at that moment, he senses a target on his back as a result of the war, seeing it as a worse condemnation than being in prison since “de la prison, on en sort vivant, pas de la guerre.”¹⁹⁰ The group in Barbusse’s novel uses the built-in military community as a means to deal with the psychological impact of war, discussing their roles as soldiers and finding common ground in their aloneness. Bardamu does not engage with the community in this way, and the result is that he is alone. Barbusse’s soldiers *feel* they are alone, but in the end, they are not. Bardamu *is* largely alone; hence, he has a constant feeling of threat and even death after the war has ended. Even though they realized that their community could only protect them up to a point, the soldiers in *Le feu* had more protection than did Bardamu. His isolation lends to his paranoia.

¹⁸⁸ The importance of sports between the two wars translated to France as well as the countries with a fascist regime. The values of masculinity and the male friendship group needed an outlet during this time. The French writer Henry de Montherlant articulated this need, as he “viewed sports as a peacetime continuation of war, the best surviving test of masculinity” (Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality* 128). Mosse does note that de Montherlant’s motivation in maintaining this athletic brand of masculinity in peacetime was primarily his homosexual desire, but nonetheless, it was a common way of keeping a martial attitude outside of war (Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality* 128-9).

¹⁸⁹ Céline 111

¹⁹⁰ Céline 15

Bardamu's fear of (and attraction to) bodily threats remain after the war in his work as a physician. In this role, he is (supposedly) able to control bodies, while at war he was not able to do the same. There is a distinct connection between his career choice and his fascination with the potential for destruction within the human body. He surrounds himself with disease. Indeed, according to Alice Kaplan, a scholar of 20th-Century French literature and cultural studies, "Céline's society is built on disease. Disease, he lets us know, is the only thing that levels all society's classes to the same base."¹⁹¹ Violence and disease, elements that threaten bodily harm, encircle Bardamu's entire identity as a physician and war veteran. His role as both a physician and a war veteran connect his past in the war to his present and likely to his future, all through the same thread of violence. He views the world in the violent terms he experienced during war. The following scene he witnesses of the death of two men demonstrates what type of images follow this character into his post-war life, one that he will revisit later as a physician:

Ils s'embrassaient tous les deux pour le moment et pour toujours mais le cavalier n'avait plus sa tête, rien qu'une ouverture au-dessus du cou, avec du sang dedans qui mijotait en glouglous comme de la confiture dans la marmite. Le colonel avait son ventre ouvert, il en faisait une sale grimace. Ça avait dû lui faire du mal ce coup-là au moment où c'était arrivé [...]

¹⁹¹ Alice Kaplan. "The Céline Effect: A 1992 Survey of Contemporary American Writers." *Modernism/Modernity* 3.1 (1996): 117-136, 100. Kaplan refers here to "Céline's society," which I take to refer to the society he creates in the text, where Bardamu exists.

Toutes ces viandes saignaient énormément ensemble. Des obus éclataient encore à la droite et à la gauche de la scène.¹⁹²

He begins this description with a pleasant image of two men embracing, suggesting a positive scene of camaraderie to follow, but the image quickly turns grisly. Once dead, these men are no longer men, but bleeding slabs of meat. Not only does he experience this disturbing scene, but in that moment, with shells falling down on him, he is equally at risk for the same fate of these two men. He takes on an inappropriately nonchalant tone given the severity of the situation through his mention of the pain the shell must have caused the colonel, which suggests a lack of sympathy, “Tant pis pour lui!”¹⁹³ Even when he leaves the area, he indicates that he was “joliment heureux d’avoir un aussi beau prétexte pour foutre le camp. J’en chantonnais même un brin, en titubant, comme quand on a fini une bonne partie de canotage et qu’on a les jambes un peu drôles.”¹⁹⁴ His reaction is one either of complete denial or of a sociopathic individual, or even perhaps both. There is no suggestion that he processes this moment in a healthy way, or at all—he does not discuss the situation with his community, which is how the soldiers in *Le feu* appear to heal and live with the psychological trauma of witnessing this violence.¹⁹⁵

Bardamu is either not able to or not willing to work through the trauma of war.

The question that this inability or unwillingness poses is whether and in what sense this

¹⁹² Céline 17-8

¹⁹³ Céline 17

¹⁹⁴ Céline 18

¹⁹⁵ Given the time frame of *Le feu* compared to *Voyage*, we never do see the soldiers in *Le feu* after the war ends, so there is no way to know how they have eventually processed what they have witnessed. Their attitude within the gory scene, however, is not in any way similar to Bardamu’s cold reaction.

post-war hostility directly relates to his time as a soldier and the trauma he suffered but never acknowledged. Bardamu, narrating his own story, gives no explicit explanation of what impact his days on the front had on his strong pull towards aggression later, in spite of the disgust he feels towards violence. Yet the connections he describes between what he saw in the trenches and what he sees as a doctor surely suggest an influence between the two periods of his life. Given the way in which he relates these two periods, the reader understands how the trenches never leave him while he does his work as a physician. They cannot be fully divorced.

Bardamu shifts from seeing destruction in the war as a soldier to seeing it everywhere as a physician, and through this career, he continues to misunderstand his attraction to violence, similar to his desire for aggression towards Lola. Instead of seeing the bloodshed of war and of non-war violence as distinct, he relates all violence back to the trenches. Clearly, the experience of war shifted something within him, and violence is part of who he is. It surrounds him, especially through the female body. When treating a woman who has complications from an abortion, he describes the scene he sees, “ça faisait ‘glouglou’ entre ses jambes comme dans le cou coupé du colonel à la guerre.”¹⁹⁶ This flashback image of the colonel’s bloody end emerges for Bardamu well after the war has ended. Bardamu describes the abortion scene in explicit terms of war. He makes a connection between female genitals and a war casualty, the blood being the link. Bardamu chose to be a doctor, thus forcing himself to confront a variety of bodily reactions that would bring him back to his time in battle. Given his disturbing attitude

¹⁹⁶ Céline 260

towards violence originating in his traumatic experience of war, his choice of postwar profession reveals a real masochism within this character. His continued exposure to bodily destruction, inevitable in his new career, is his own form of personal emotional and psychological self-abuse.

His decision to remain a physician, given his military background, thus seems like a perverse form of self-punishment, a constant reminder of the carnage of war and further evidence of his fascination with the abject. Blood and mutilated bodies exist in his worldview, and these images are graphic and visceral. We get a vivid picture of the abortion and the colonel's death simply with his use of the term "glouglou" to describe both scenes. Initially shaped by his time as a soldier, he maintains his identity as an individual surrounded by violence as a result of his postwar career choice. Through this choice, he seeks out reasons to renew his dislike of war combined with his distrust and disgust of women. In seeing his dead colonel between his female patient's legs, the ways in which Bardamu has reacted towards women throughout the entire novel, seeking them out even though they repulse him, becomes comprehensible. He sees in this woman's condition a dead figure of authority, yet he sexualizes her, describing, among other aspects of her physique and demeanor, "ses belles cuisses longues et veloutées...son quelque chose de tendrement volontaire et de précisément gracieux dans les mouvements qui complète les femmes bien balancées sexuellement."¹⁹⁷ This particular female body is a prime example of abjection, fitting with Kristeva's description of the abject, particularly with regard to reproductive function where, according to the feminist and psychoanalytic

¹⁹⁷ Céline 259

culture critic Barbara Creed, “unlike the male body, the proper female body is penetrable, changes shape, swells, gives birth, contracts, lactates.”¹⁹⁸ Here, though, rather than give birth, this female body bleeds and succumbs to its own abjection, dying because of the abortion. Bardamu sees this patient as a promiscuous figure, referencing that this is her third abortion at the age of twenty-five, as well as her “goût pour les coïts comme peu de femelles en ont.”¹⁹⁹ He notes the frequency of this woman’s abortions alongside these complications, implying for the reader that it is because of her sexual promiscuity leading to several abortions that she is suffering. Additionally, the narrator positions his reference to the abortion complications in between two descriptions of her overt sexuality, creating a connection between her misery and her sexuality. She is ultimately punished for her sexuality, a karmic revenge that the Freikorps would appreciate as it shows power over the female sexual identity that they understand as destructive.

Being drawn to women, though they are threatening, is an articulation of Bardamu’s love/hate relationship with violence in general. Bardamu hates war, but revels in brutality. It is not a type of violence that is immediately understandable, especially in its extreme pacifism, stemming from a total rejection of war. To be sure, Bardamu does not want to be the one to enact the violence. An important part of his identity as a soldier is that he fears fighting, as he writes,

Certains soldats bien doués, à ce que j’avais entendu conter,
éprouvaient quand ils se mêlaient aux combats, une sorte de

¹⁹⁸ Barbara Creed. "Lesbian Bodies: Tribades, Tomboys, and Tarts." *Feminist Theory and the Body: A Reader*. Ed. Margrit Shildrick and Jane Price. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999. 111-124, 112.

¹⁹⁹ Céline 259

griserie et même une vive volupté. Dès que pour ma part j’essayais d’imaginer une volupté de cet ordre bien spécial, je m’en rendais malade pendant huit jours au moins. Je me sentais si incapable de tuer quelqu’un, qu’il valait décidément mieux que j’y renonce et que j’en finisse toute de suite. Non que l’expérience m’eût manqué, on avait même fait tout pour me donner le goût, mais le don me faisait défaut. Il m’aurait fallu peut-être une plus lente initiation.²⁰⁰

He does not find the same satisfaction or joy in actually committing physically cruel acts that the Freikorps find. This quotation does not tell us that he is unable to kill, but that the problem for him is that he finds no pleasure in the act, and it even makes him sick.

His description suggests that the French military attempted to train him to learn to enjoy killing—“on avait même fait tout pour me donner le goût,”²⁰¹ but he never gained this “skill.” Thus the military does attempt to take away the displeasure of killing from its soldiers. Bardamu never got what he refers to as the “gift” of that particular ability. Particularly for the soldier in combat, his masculine gender identity struggles under the conflict between the id, the ego, and the superego upon which American Lt. Col. Grossman elaborates in his book, *On Killing*. Grossman shows the conflict between the soldier’s masculine duty to kill, the suppression of the superego by military authority, and the nonetheless powerful overriding instinct not to kill, writing “the id wields the Thanatos like a club and screams at the ego to kill. The superego appears to have been

²⁰⁰ Céline 91

²⁰¹ Céline 91

neutralized, for authority and society say that now it is good to do what has always been bad [to kill]. Yet something stops the soldier from killing. What? Could it be that Eros, the life force, is much stronger than ever before understood?"²⁰² If he is a man, and a good soldier, he kills, but if he is incapable of killing, he is not a good soldier, and therefore, according to military rhetoric, not a man. Thus *being a man* is a constant struggle between pre-war values and the values the military attempts to instill in the soldier. Though Bardamu rejects violence within war, he embraces it outside of war, thereby fulfilling, though indirectly and perversely, the military imperative for a violent, warrior-like masculine identity. Surrounding himself with violence as a physician is Bardamu's way of negotiating Eros and the military-imposed version of Thanatos requiring that he kill and accept the possibility of being killed. Bardamu is thus able to "be a man" in some military sense, facing blood and carnage full on, without having to enact it.

During the war, however, for Bardamu, this struggle between the id, the ego, and the superego that Grossman outlines results in a perverse interpretation of human relationships. Bardamu lacks the ability to kill, but must do so anyway, resulting in a perverse satisfaction with violence that he can only consume from a distance, but not personally enact. He has a craving for physical malice as he appreciates its result. His desire for the war to end shows that he supports carnage. He writes,

‘Ils sont peut-être tous morts à l’heure actuelle? ...Puisqu’ils ne veulent rien comprendre à rien, c’est ça qui serait avantageux et pratique qu’ils

²⁰² Lt. Col. David Grossman. *On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society*. New York: Back Bay Books: Little, Brown and Company, 1996, 37.

soient tous tués très vite...Comme ça on en finirait tout de suite...On rentrerait chez soi...On repasserait peut-être place Clichy en triomphe...Un ou deux seulement qui survivraient...²⁰³

This excerpt shows there is violence within Bardamu, interspersed with his rhetoric about his desire for peace, revealing that he is for peace at any price, even if one must resort to killing and death to earn it. He sees this violence as the means justified by the ends of peace, recalling Walter Benjamin's essay, *Critique of Violence*. Benjamin questions, "whether violence, as a principle, could be a moral means even to just ends."²⁰⁴ For Bardamu, the ends—peace—are just, but in examining the above quotation from the text, he is not concerned with the morality of the means of violence. Benjamin elaborates on military violence specifically, as it relates particularly to lawmaking. He writes, "this [military] violence confronts the law with the threat of declaring a new law."²⁰⁵ While Bardamu appears to want victory in this scenario—"On repasserait peut-être place Clichy en triomphe"²⁰⁶—he does not articulate this desire as related to a victory over the Germans, and a resistance to "new law." Rather, his motivations rest in the benefits of heroism, as during his imagined victory march,

on entrerait au restaurant, on vous servirait sans payer, on payerait plus rien, jamais plus de la vie! On est les héros! qu'on dirait au moment de la note...Des défenseurs de la Patrie! Et ça suffirait !...On payerait avec des petits drapeaux français ! La caissière refuserait même l'argent des héros

²⁰³ Céline 18

²⁰⁴ Walter Benjamin. "Critique of Violence." *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings*. Ed. Peter Demetz. Trans. Edmund Jephcott. New York: Schocken Books, 1986. 277-300, 277.

²⁰⁵ Benjamin 283

²⁰⁶ Céline 18

et même elle vous en donnerait, avec des baisers quand on passerait devant sa caisse.²⁰⁷

Bardamu uses the notion of *patrie* as a joke by treating the French flag as currency. He does not articulate any fear of German takeover or real pride in patriotism, rather he mocks the *patrie* as his desire to win relates to the potential gifts of a hero rather than to national freedom. Thus, we cannot use Benjamin's examinations of new laws coming from violence or the morality of violence to the end of peace to interpret Bardamu's way of relating to violence, as his interpretation does not see similar values in violence, but rather, he only mocks the bloodshed of war to maintain a distance from it.

The only condition Bardamu places on this violence is for him to avoid it physically. Still, calling for the death of his comrades in the army, he is complicit in the cruelty of war whether he directly engages with it or not. In rejecting violence channeled in the "proper" ways, Bardamu rejects the martial identity. He has no interest in homosocial bonding; rather, he feels a sense of rage against his own. While martially masculine men must accept aggression, to maintain productivity for the nation, this assaulting behavior requires a specific focus. Bardamu's interpretation of war and violence focuses on the exact opposite of where it needs to be to fulfill the soldier's identity needed to accomplish the war effort.

One of the major conflicts for Bardamu is his relationship to violence and the value he places on it. He connects his attitude towards violence to its inevitability. He says,

²⁰⁷ Céline 18

Il existe pour le pauvre en ce monde deux grandes manières de crever, soit par l'interférence absolue de vos semblables en temps de paix, ou par la passion homicide des mêmes en temps de guerre venue. S'ils se mettent à penser à vous, c'est à votre torture qu'ils songent aussitôt les autres, et rien qu'à ça. On ne les intéresse que saignants, les salauds!²⁰⁸

There is violence and death in peacetime and wartime. Bardamu admits that peace does not prohibit brutality and that violence occurs due to the intervention of others. For him, the only way to enter into a relationship with another individual is in an aggressive context. Bardamu sees no reason why anyone would want to think about someone else, except to do harm. He does not even trust that peace is better than war, saying “tant qu'on est à la guerre, on dit que ce sera mieux dans la paix et puis on bouffe cet espoir-là comme si c'était du bonbon et puis c'est rien quand même que de la merde.”²⁰⁹ Yet the gore that he finds in peacetime is largely of his own doing, as we see from his career choice and the bodily destruction that he finds through performing his duties. While as a doctor, he is able to surround himself with destroying and destroyed bodies, similar to times of war. Although the doctor's job is to alleviate suffering, Bardamu's presence in the field of medicine and his intense interest in bodily destruction suggest motives outside of the care and treatment of other people. He treats people in an effort to cure them, yet while doing so, is able to confirm his belief that violence is inevitable.

For the Freikorps, too, fighting is inevitable, and embraced. As Benadusi writes, “Fascist men lived in a permanent state of war; their virility was based on courage and

²⁰⁸ Céline 83

²⁰⁹ Céline 235

heroic actions.”²¹⁰ Bardamu fits with the first part of this quotation, but he does not follow up with the second portion. Bardamu does see destruction everywhere, which could imply a type of militarized lifestyle. However, what we see in this character is the potential unintended consequence of militarizing the citizenry, where the violence is constantly present in the way in which Bardamu lives his life. His identity is immersed in this violence, but without the focus that militarized everyday life must bring to this aggression. It is not aggression intended to save the nation or to maintain a strong, virile citizenship, but rather, it is intent on a destruction of everything surrounding this character. There is nothing resembling martially masculine qualities in the expectation of violence Bardamu describes, but rather a mistrust of everyone, suggesting a rejection of the community in favor of individual priorities. When Bardamu says “S’ils se mettent à penser à vous, c’est à votre torture qu’il songent aussitôt les autres, et rien qu’à ça,”²¹¹ he is not showing any faith in the communal implications that are necessarily associated with martial masculinity. Bardamu takes on an individualistic mentality, which relates to his emphasis on cowardice. There is no reason to attempt bravery when there is no community sentiment. Bardamu’s hostility has its basis in cowardice, rather than bravery. In fact, Bardamu has a clear disdain for martial masculinity in general, specifically concerning bravery:

Je conçus en même temps qu’il devait y en avoir beaucoup des comme lui
(*sic*) dans notre armée, des braves, et puis tout autant sans doute dans
l’armée d’en face. Qui savait combien? Un, deux, plusieurs millions

²¹⁰ Benadusi 29

²¹¹ Céline 82

peut-être en tout? Dès lors ma frousse devint panique. Avec des êtres semblables, cette imbécilité infernale pouvait continuer indéfiniment... Pourquoi s'arrêteraient-ils ? Jamais je n'avais senti plus implacable la sentence des hommes et des choses. Serais-je donc le seul lâche sur la terre? pensais-je.²¹²

Bardamu offers a negative view of the terms of martial masculinity. Bravery—manifested in the ability and willingness to put your life at risk for another—is a necessary quality for the soldier and therefore for martial masculinity. The German General Carl von Clausewitz described bravery immediately after the Napoleonic wars, publishing in 1832 his manifesto *On War*. He wrote, “bravery, which is a natural gift of some men, may arise in a soldier as a part of an Army from habit and custom, so with him it must also have a different direction from that which it has with others.”²¹³ As a general involved in these earlier 19th-Century conflicts, von Clausewitz came to believe in the importance of “natural” bravery that the army’s influence instilled in a soldier. The military had high stakes in getting soldiers to feel a sense of bravery, which continued beyond the conflicts of the 19th-Century. Bravery combined with the importance of the homosocial group emphasizes the importance of the notion of the “band of brothers” so prevalent in war. One fights for one’s nation, but also to protect one’s unit. Without the desire to protect the nation or even your soldierly brother, bravery has no purpose. Thus, Bardamu did not participate in this sentiment, as he had no desire to continue to fight for anyone.

²¹² Céline 13

²¹³ Carl Von Clausewitz. *On War*. Trans. J.J. Graham. Project Guttenberg, 2005, 147.

War requires bravery, and for Bardamu that bravery simply leads to never-ending fighting in which he has no interest. He sees nothing positive in the bravery of a soldier, only more war. He rejects what the State demands of masculinity, in other words, the behavior and sentiment that institutions of power request of him as a man. This rejection, paired with his desire for violence that is not in line with the precise form of fighting required for a French victory, positions Bardamu's actions outside of those which the State sanctions. Yet he only comes to this conclusion after the clarifying experience of witnessing war. Leo Braudy writes on the impact of war on men, that

Men at war are on the front line of a more exacting and more one-sided definition of what it means to be a man than ever faces men at peace. By its emphasis placed on the physical prowess of men enhanced by their machines, by its distillation of national identity into the abrupt contrast between winning and losing, war enforces an extreme version of male behavior as the ideal model for all such behavior.²¹⁴

War is a situation that pushes masculinity to its extremes, with an emphasis on the importance of physical ability. It is a space where men must be superheroes,²¹⁵ and where the stakes are high. War functions as the mechanism for the creation of masculinity but in addition to building it, as we see in Céline, war can have the alternate impact, of breaking masculinity down, because of these very high stakes. Bardamu does not maintain any sense of virile identity, in spite of his vicious nature and his frequent

²¹⁴ Braudy xvi

²¹⁵ The notion that Braudy suggests of “men enhanced by their machines” offers an image of a man who has extraordinary, machine-like, mythic abilities, much like those of a superhero.

sexual experiences, all factors that European cultures saw as characteristics of a masculine identity. These potentially masculine proclivities of his are simply channeled in the wrong direction to accommodate the supposedly desired masculine identity, as they are plagued with uncertainty and fear and because his motivations are selfish rather than community based. Bardamu does not fit in with the hopeful stereotype of the virile, martial, European man of the early 20th-Century.

Bardamu's disgust with so many aspects of masculinity serves to shed light on the individual's interpretation of its requirements, showing how these requirements are lived, or not. Catharine Savage Brosman, a literary critic and essayist who works primarily on French literature, writes that war literature overall, like Céline's *Voyage au bout de la nuit*, offers a "recording [of] not simply the causes and conduct of armed conflict or individual battles but the manner in which they are lived, felt, used, and transformed by participants."²¹⁶ Céline's novel reveals his narrator's disgust with war and the ways in which it transformed him.

This literature does provide an ideal mechanism through which to understand social values as well as the rejection of those values. Céline's narrator offers an inverted version of wartime values and the identity he establishes for himself reflects those values. He understands violence, which is crucial for a soldier, yet his form of violence harms the war effort instead of helping it. Bardamu rejects the community outlet that ideally should control the ferocious nature of martial masculinity when necessary. He fears women and links them to physical and mental devastation; once again demonstrating an attitude that

²¹⁶ Catharine Savage Brosman. "The Functions of War Literature." *South Central Review* 9.1 (1992): 85-98, 86.

soldiers have taken on to better fight for their country, as we saw through the rhetoric of fascism. Recognizing the “danger” in women allows soldiers to focus on their task of war. Yet while Bardamu fears and hates women, and associates them with death, just as his fascist counterparts do, he does not avoid them, rather he seeks them out. This attitude towards women coincides with his attitude towards violence—he likes violence in inappropriate, unproductive ways, and one of those ways is through his interactions with women, interactions that are cruel in nature. While his identity coincides with many expectations of martial masculinity, such as an attraction towards violence, Bardamu offers an alternative version of masculinity that flips martial masculinity on its head, truly revealing its potential negative consequences when engaged with on an individual rather than on a communal level.

Conclusion

By telling stories of soldiers during wartime, these authors articulate the varied ways in which the characters identify themselves as soldiers, whether the identifications closely ally with martial masculinity, or reject it or in some instances manage to exist in a space in-between its acceptance and rejection. In both Céline’s and Barbusse’s novels, the characters reject a form of martial masculinity, but do so in distinct, almost opposing ways, which demonstrate a separation between existing in war through community or through the individual. Barbusse’s characters take on the importance of community, especially through conversation. While their bodies are at risk throughout the events in

the narrative, they gain support through the discussion *en commun* of their position and their identity within this space of vulnerability²¹⁷.

This interpretation of soldiers at war directly contrasts with Bardamu's image. Refusing positive community, Bardamu takes the atrocities of war into his worldview. He sees it as the only way to interact with others. These interactions are not physically violent, but inhabit cruelty through his attraction to the abject. Though cowardly and not interested in killing, Bardamu takes on the aggressive identity of the soldier without any way to channel it outside of war. Barbusse's men are similar to Bardamu in war, each surrounded by violence and their own vulnerability. Yet through a discussion of their identity, Barbusse's men are able to separate their identities from this massacre. In being able to reject ideologically the glamorization of heroism and of martial masculinity by resisting these behavioral tropes, the intentions of which are to promote destruction in war, they see their position in the conflict for what it is. They understand that, as soldiers, their identities and their heroism belong to the State. They protect themselves from this 'State takeover' through a rhetoric of rejection of the tropes of heroism in war within their group. By separating themselves from the identity the State demands of them, if only verbally, they avoid having violence seep into their identities.

For Barbusse's men, the question of masculinity is not a priority. They articulate no benefit to engaging with war in the martially masculine way that the State desires. Bardamu also rejects military violence as a means to express masculinity, mocking the conventional way of proving masculinity through violence in war. Instead, Bardamu's

²¹⁷ They are thus able to reject the principles of the war, but still participate fully in it, thereby contributing to the suspicion that this is not a fully pacifist novel.

way of “being a man” is to surround himself after war with the violence that he could not handle in the trenches. He is thus able to claim closeness to the violence that martial masculinity requires without actually engaging in it himself.

Chapter 2: Injury, Death, Race and Masculinity: The Nurse's Novel

When examining a list of better-known and more easily accessible literature from World Wars I and II, one is most likely to come across titles by male authors. Yet there exist texts written by women, especially nursing memoirs, both fiction and non-fiction, from the Great War, which over time did not maintain a strong readership. These texts offer the possibility of a rich examination of the time, and as I am considering war within the theme of gender, masculinity specifically, concentrating on male authors simply because they are better known would provide an incomplete analysis. These texts demonstrate the influence that women had on the interpretation of martial masculinity. Female narrators provide insight into a different view of masculinity, one that exists as a result of the consequences of war. The hospital setting provides a space where the soldiers recover once they have already “proven” their masculinity through battle. In the hospital, they are vulnerable, and the nurses’ perceptions of the soldiers’ new role exposes some masculine vulnerabilities. In this space of injury, we are able to see the contradictions of war’s requirements of martial masculinity along with war’s inevitable path to vulnerability. I examine the interaction between the injured soldiers and their nurses to explore these contradictions.

Women saw their roles change with war alongside a general shift towards male vulnerability. Journalist Marie Gatard and historian Fabienne Mercier-Bernadet discuss women’s war roles in their book, *Combats de femmes, d’une guerre à l’autre*. They write that although women were not directly involved in combat for France, they did take over

the manufacturing roles that men had to abandon.²¹⁸ When women had to take on roles typically reserved for men, the French government framed this shift in a patriotic context, the same context in which the government forcefully encouraged men to serve in the military (See Appendix A).²¹⁹ Thus, there was an expectation that women would take on masculine roles during the war, just as men had to engage in hyper-masculine behavior models through martial masculinity. Elisabeth Badinter describes the social logic behind these roles. She argues that beginning in the nineteenth century, due to the revelation of internal biological differences from medical research, men and women existed in completely different spheres. Because of this biological distinction, “hommes et femmes évoluent dans deux mondes distincts et ne se rencontrent guère [...] sinon le temps de la reproduction.”²²⁰ Badinter explains the distinct roles of each sex: “[La femme] règne en maître sur son foyer, préside à l’éducation des enfants et incarne sans conteste la loi morale qui décide des bonnes mœurs. À lui, le reste du monde. En charge de la production, de la création et du politique, la sphère publique est son élément naturel.”²²¹ With the shift in roles that occurs just after the turn of the 19th-Century as a result of World War I, asking women to take on men’s roles implies that male jobs are necessary for the functioning of society both in a time of war and peace, while traditional women’s roles could easily be set aside as less critical.

²¹⁸ Marie Gatard and Fabienne Mercier-Bernadet. *Combats de femmes, d’une guerre à l’autre*. Sceaux: L’esprit du livre éditions, 2009, 11.

²¹⁹ *Aux femmes françaises*: This poster is a type of “call to arms” for women during the war to work in roles that had been traditionally reserved for men (Gatard and Mercier-Bernadet 10).

²²⁰ Badinter 21

²²¹ Badinter 21

This necessary labor shift demonstrates the ways in which men had traditionally taken on roles with productive value while women's roles (in the private sphere, with the family) had (and still have) less perceived value to society. Articulated through the necessity of the completion of "men's tasks," the pressure on masculinity in society is powerful. As shown in Appendix A, the government requests that the women leave their places in the private sphere to take on men's jobs in the public sphere, inevitably leaving less time for the presumably less important "women's tasks," while men take on the even more "masculine task" of making war. Everyone is shifting towards the more masculine end of the gender spectrum because of war.

Women were able to make their own mark on the war effort, but in very restricted ways. Nursing was the space where women took their skills from the private sphere and implemented them in the public sphere, thus exposing these women to the war and its destruction. Literature by and about women took the form of memoirs of war, where nursing (in World Wars I and II) and the Resistance (in World War II) was the primary position for women to contribute to the war effort. These nursing novels engage primarily with the relationships between the nurse and the injured soldier, which strongly models the mother-child relationship, thus elevating that type of relationship to a higher form of patriotism.

French historian Margaret Darrow, who studies women and war, often through literature, writes on the subject of one of the texts I examine, Swiss-born Noëlle Roger's *Les carnets d'une Infirmière* (1915), a nursing memoir set during World War I. This work is separated into six separate booklets, each carrying a theme. The titles of the

sections are as follows: *Premier Carnet* and *Deuxième Carnet*, both entitled *Soldats blessés*; *Troisième Carnet*, *Silhouettes d'hôpital*; *Quatrième Carnet*, *Figures de Héros*; *Cinquième Carnet*, *Héroïques Femmes*; and *Sixième Carnet*, *Entre Camarades*. The narrator does not disclose information on nationality or on hospital location, though she indicates that the hospital does serve both French and German soldiers, as well as colonial soldiers fighting for France. Darrow notes that

Although praised at the time [...] the personal accounts of war nursing published during and immediately after the war soon went out of print and today are difficult to find. [...] World War II produced legends of female heroism; World War I did not. Since the volunteer nurses of World War I had the best chance to create a story of women's war experience, the fact that no such story entered the culture is significant.²²²

Darrow hypothesizes on possibilities as to why these texts did not last. She relates this phenomenon to the different relationship women and men had to the war, writing,

The simplest way for women to stake a claim upon a war experience [in literature] was not to define a rival feminine war but to embrace the masculine war myth of self-sacrifice for one's country and to claim it for women. The volunteer nurse was well-positioned to make this claim, but

²²² Margaret H. Darrow. "French Volunteer Nursing and the Myth of War Experience in World War I." *The American Historical Review* 101.1 (1996): 80-106, 84. It is true that the titles I have found on women during the Great War are out of print and not available in many libraries. As part of my work on this chapter, I digitized Roger's text to preserve it for future readers and scholars.

it excluded her from the critical position on the margin. [...] To be in the war at all, women had to accept, at least partially, the heroic myth.²²³

While men were able to be more critical of the war through their writing, women did not have as much room to do so because they were not participants in the same capacity as men. This is not to say that all men's texts were critical of the war, in fact, far from it. The official stance on the war was uncritical of its meaning and consequences, maintaining "a coherent set of concepts and images and a glamorous rhetoric that purported to convey the true meaning of war, full of courage, heroism, self-sacrifice, and manly honor."²²⁴ In general, the soldiers who came out of the war to write about their experience upheld the war myth, which maintained and "symbolized the war's promise."²²⁵ There were, nevertheless, writings that rejected this myth, but they were only a small portion of the published literature.²²⁶ These nursing texts take in the war myth and relate it fully to the myth of masculinity while considering how these masculine requirements cannot be upheld after the physical trauma of war. Even with this blatant contradiction, these nursing texts are not overtly critical of the war. Simply stated, men had more liberty to be critical of the war, given their obviously active role in it. Women were not generally recognized for their active role, and thus in order to obtain any recognition of their story, they needed to maintain a pro-war myth stance.

²²³ Margaret H. Darrow. *French Women and the First World War: War Stories of the Home Front*. Oxford: Berg, 2000, 153.

²²⁴ Darrow, *Women* 151

²²⁵ George L. Mosse. "The Two World Wars and the Myth of the War Experience." *Journal of Contemporary History* 21.4 (1986): 491-513, 491.

²²⁶ Darrow, *Women* 151

As such, the novels by women that I study are, overall, more romanticizing of war, and of men's roles in war than are the works created by men. Yet when considering men's roles after war, these nursing texts are very skeptical the men will be able to re-enter the workforce in the roles they had beforehand, and as such, their financial livelihood is at stake. Meanwhile, the men's texts that I examine do not seem to treat the financial issues quite as obviously. This cynicism provides a rare glimpse of criticism of the war myth. By questioning men's roles after war injury, one questions the war itself. For what good does the fighting do on an individual level if a man cannot fully live after the fighting is over? The position that female writers adopt on the war and on the myth of the hero has an impact on their writing. Darrow explains further,

As a result [of their embrace of the masculine war myth], it is not surprising that the memoirs of wartime nurses are unconvincing either as literature or as historical records. Few memoirs resolved the tension between the rhetoric of heroic sacrifice and the reality of dirt, pain, fear, and fatigue, with most memoirs swinging from one mode to the other without any attempt at reconciliation.²²⁷

To be sure, Darrow is pointing to a very narrow valuation of memoir. Nonetheless, I agree with her point that the problems she identifies may have led to these memoirs not entering in the canon. However, the canon cannot be the only measure of valuable literature, and many of these novels are worth examining. This lack of reconciliation between the difficulty of war and the heroic sacrifice reveals the tension between these

²²⁷ Darrow, *Women* 153

two issues. The myth of heroic sacrifice does not always admit to the fear and terror that war causes. Rather, the hero myth tends to eliminate the gruesome aspects of war, with the figure of the hero returning to the nation handsome and unharmed after having performed his duty. Yet the difficulties and realities of war suggest that the hero cannot come home untouched by its horrors. Roger's text puts these two issues, the gore of war and the hero myth, side-by-side, without pointing to the contradictions between them. While the lack of reconciliation between the two points does suggest the impossibility of a resolution, the tensions are well presented, and the nurses' acceptance of the soldiers' vulnerability suggests a small but significant questioning of the overall martially masculine myth.

Darrow points to two contrasting texts as examples of the problem of believability within the narratives. Roger's *Carnets* is not successful at reconciling the romantic image of war that the text claims while, at the same time, depicting serious and often fatal injuries to men. In contrast, Darrow argues that Madeleine Clemenceau Jacquemaire's *Les hommes de bonne volonté* (1919),²²⁸ another fictional nursing memoir with a similar method of character representation as Roger's *Carnets*, rejects notions of an idealized war, largely refusing to view the violent conflict as anything other than a violent conflict.²²⁹ Throughout this chapter, I also do readings of Jacquemaire's text. While I agree with Darrow that Jacquemaire's text contains fewer contradictions between the war

²²⁸ Jacquemaire's novel also represents male nurses; however, the narrator focuses solely on the relationship between the patients and the female nurses, similar to Roger's *Carnets*, as opposed to the relationship between the patients and the male hospital employees (other nurses, doctors, surgeons, etc.).

²²⁹ Darrow, *Women* 154

myth and the war reality, her narrator is still fully subscribed to the belief that victory is important and honorable,²³⁰ which is a primary tenet of the war myth because it imposes the opposite—that loss is dishonorable, even shameful.²³¹

Though technically women could not enlist in the military or be in the trenches, they did see combat-like situations, given that a foreign force was invading their country. They experienced bombs and injuries. Those who took on nursing roles in particular saw the devastating results of the violence of the war, and thus did not have much more protection than men did. Nursing accounts provide an image of the soldier not as he sees himself in the trenches, but as his caretaker sees him after he has undergone a trauma. Within these texts, there are indirect references to the soldiers' masculinity, as related to their physical (and less frequently, emotional and mental) state after injury while being cared for in the hospital. While the women play their usual role of caretakers on a larger stage, this hospital setting puts the men in an impossible position vis-à-vis war. Men at war are supposed to protect women, yet when they are injured, the women must care for the men. Thus, once a man does his duty in sacrificing his body, he is vulnerable due to his injury, and must be tended to, which is a direct contradiction of martial masculinity. Conversely, the role women as nurses perform fits squarely in the mold of maternal femininity. These novels by female writers elaborate and complicate this contradiction by articulating the unique nurse-war patient relationship, thus offering a valuable perspective on war literature.

²³⁰ Jacquemaire 278

²³¹ I engage in an analysis of this question of shame in defeat through the novel by the Groult sisters in Chapter four.

In their roles as nurses, these women are saving men, sometimes in dire circumstances. Thus, their position and their actions are not that different from those of men on the battlefield, where men must save their comrades. These tasks call into question the “masculine” nature of war and the implication that only men, and particularly only martially masculine men, can fulfill the requirements of war. These female characters demonstrate a capacity for effectiveness under extreme pressure, oftentimes in situations similar to combat.

Roger’s *Carnets* includes a preface in which Roger claims that the content is non-fiction, collected from various nurses throughout the country, and told by one narrator. This claim is reminiscent of the long history of similar prefaces in French literature. Montesquieu’s *Lettres persanes* comes to mind, which states in its preface that the letters of the Persian noblemen that make up the epistolary novel are real, thereby causing suspicion of this assertion of non-fiction. As I have found no evidence beyond the claims of the preface that this text is non-fiction, yet have no certainty that it is fiction, I will keep in mind the tenuous nature of the fiction vs. non-fiction divide, which I have elaborated in my introduction.

To best serve these texts, the format of my analysis in this chapter will diverge from that of my other chapters. Due to the similar hospital setting and the ways in which both novels highlight the consequences of masculinity due to war while still treating the circumstances differently, I found it most productive to examine these texts through the patterns and critical issues they present, rather than taking on each novel independently, as I have in other chapters. These two novels offer differing perspectives on similar

themes that are best examined in contrast, mainly because I focus most of my analysis on Roger's text, while using Jacquemaire's as a point of comparison when their treatment of the issues diverge. As such, I have organized this chapter first to examine the ways in which these two novels represent women's roles in war, followed by an examination of the interpretation of injured and of dying masculinity. Due to the importance of the body in martial masculinity, the injured warrior is a particularly relevant figure to examine to understand how masculinity is transformed through bodily changes, especially bodily trauma. When a warrior body is injured, it exists on the other side of the conflict—the man it belongs to is no longer able to fight for the nation, and becomes one in need of defense and revenge. Finally, I examine these two novels' treatment of race, war, and masculinity through the inclusion of colonial soldier characters.

Overall, these novels offer representations of the vulnerability of men in the aftermath of war, in a space where they seem to have a free pass to ignore the required martial masculinity of the trenches. Instead, they adopt an infantile position, with the encouragement and influence of the nurses, and revert to childhood, often calling out for their mothers. They occupy the opposite position to that of the warring martially masculine male. A further contrast to the image of the martially masculine soldier is the presence of the colonial soldier in these texts, which the narrators describe in more detail in these fictional nursing memoirs than do the narrators of the male-authored texts. By introducing race, not only is the masculinity of the white French soldiers contrasted with their previously non-injured selves, but it is also set against the masculinity of the colonial soldiers.

While these colonial characters are present in men's writing of the Great War (Barbusse's *Le Feu* in particular), their presence is brief. In the novels written by women, while the focus is primarily on white, French soldiers, there is more time and energy given to examining colonial soldiers than in the texts by male authors. This is not to say that these female authors write colonial soldiers as thoroughly developed characters with humanity; rather, the development of black characters is still a blind spot among these writers. Nevertheless, these female writers give the colonial male contributors to the French war effort more textual space than the male writers do. I use this chapter to begin to examine the intersections between race and masculinity as well, within the specific context of injury, death, and the hospital. I consider all these themes through the lens of women's roles in war.

Women's role in war

The work of the nurse was the female equivalent of military service during World War I.²³² In this position, women were able to contribute to the war effort, and as such, they were exposed to the war's bloody consequences. Jacquemaire's unnamed narrator, following the story of a nurse, M^{me} Berton, depicts these horrors plainly in *Les hommes de bonne volonté*, with her main character having to evacuate the hospital with all the injured men into an underground bunker to escape German bombs. Even though these nurses do not see combat in the trenches, they do come under fire. While they do not have the same exposure to violence, not seeing their comrades dying on the battlefield,

²³² Darrow, *Women* 154

they do see the gruesome consequences of those attacks in the injured and dying men of the hospital, including gruesome surgeries and detailed wound care. These nurses then take on the task of saving these men's lives once they reach the hospital.

When M^{me} Berton brings men out of the hospital and into the transport vans to take them to shelter, she is acting in similar ways to the men on the battlefield, pulling their injured fellow soldiers out of harm's way. When a soldier rescues another in this way, the act is considered one of bravery, an important trait in martial masculinity. Thus these nurses, though not in combat, must utilize martially masculine traits in order to help their patients. Through the masculine traits that the women take on, and due to the men's vulnerability, the women gain power according to Nancy Sloan Goldberg, a French and Women's Studies scholar who studies primarily women in war, "without the loss of conventional 'feminine' qualities, such as forbearance, propriety, and self-effacement."²³³ While war makes men out of everyone, women are still able to—or made to through cultural gender expectations—maintain "feminine" qualities and behaviors even though they engage in "masculine" roles.

Nevertheless, there existed a general sexualization of nurses based on their female/feminine sex. The image of the war nurse had strong sexual undertones. Critics of female nurses during this time believed that "a girl's true aim in volunteering to nurse war wounded was not to serve her country; it was to further her own feminine interest. Such was the equivocal result of conceptualizing women's war service as personal devotion; in these stories, instead of seeing the Nation in the body of her wounded

²³³ Nancy Sloan Goldberg. *"Woman, Your Hour is Sounding": Continuity and Change in French Woman's Great War Fiction, 1914-1919*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999, 59.

patient, the nurse saw the man.”²³⁴ Society thus viewed these women as having only sexual motivations for their work. Jacquemaire’s narrator rejects this notion, noting that “Les images montrent les infirmières coquettement juchées sur de petits souliers. Rien ne ressemble moins, à la réalité. L’infirmière porte deux paires de bas, des chaussons, des souliers à semelles fortes et des sabots pour sortir.”²³⁵ The narrator recognizes the stereotype and pushes it away with a thoroughly practical description of the everyday clothing worn by the nurses. Taking this description of simple nurse even further, the narrator draws a picture of the physical toll that the job takes on the women who undertake it. She writes,

Cependant quand la beauté physiologique a passé plusieurs heures à donner le chloroforme ou l’éther, ses traits sont décomposés; quand elle est rebutée par les nourritures grossières, elle ne mange pas ou presque, maigrit, perd ses couleurs et le brillant même de la jeunesse. Quand elle a couché sous la tente, ou dans les ‘cagnas’ humides, le rhumatisme noue ses articulations et coupe à angles droits les lignes onduleuses de sa démarche.²³⁶

The high level of energy, both mental and physical, that the nurses must expend doing their jobs physically drains them. The regular influx of injured and dying men and the constant care that the nurses must provide for them does not allow for any other thoughts, according to this narrator. She goes out of her way to describe how difficult the job is, specifically combating this stereotype of the nurse as a husband-hunter or sexual vixen.

²³⁴ Darrow, *Women* 149

²³⁵ Jacquemaire 55

²³⁶ Jacquemaire 55

The image of the overly sexualized woman was not uncommon at the time, as we saw in Klaus Theweleit's analysis of the Freikorps,²³⁷ and even though France was on the other side of the conflict, this notion of women all being hypersexual demonstrates common fears among enemies. Yet the narrator's description of the physically and emotionally drained nurse destroys any romantic image of nursing and, implicitly, of war.

In creating a sexualized image of the war nurse, the culture attempted to reject her role in the hospital by diminishing her value. If all she cares about is romance or even more scandalously, sex, then she will not be of use in a hospital, and will likely be a dangerous distraction. Additionally, there is a general fear of sexual women. The trope of the sexualized nurse served as a way of rejecting women from any position in the hospital. Jacquemaire's narrator writes of the more overt rejection of female nurses in the war hospital, where "[l]es infirmières sont généralement mal endurées par les médecins et les fonctionnaires du service de Santé, de l'infirmier au général inspecteur. 'Les femmes ne sont pas à leur place aux armées, qu'elles restent donc chez elles' disent-ils. Ce n'est pas l'avis des blessés," the narrator reacts.²³⁸ From the narrator's perspective, the male doctors do not want women participating, yet these doctors need female nurses to care properly and fully for the injured patients. By rejecting them and saying that women should not be in this war space, they acknowledge that the space these women occupy is significant, in that, in spite of being women, they work in a job in war, and are contributing to the effort. This attempt to exclude women is in line with rhetoric on maintaining masculinity in war.

²³⁷ See Chapter one

²³⁸ Jacquemaire 105

This narrator describes the hospital where she works as a space of trauma and violence, rather than of sexual desire. She tells of the experience of one of the nurses, Madame Jallin, with the injured patients, “Par moments, assez novice encore, elle se sentait ivre d’horreur et, à force de voir couper des bras, des jambes, arracher des yeux, à force de contempler des visages défoncés, des cranes perdant leur cervelle, elle oubliait son propre mal et noyait son cœur dans une pitié sans limites pour l’humanité déchirée.”²³⁹ Through this graphic description of injury, the narrator dismantles any romanticized notion both of nursing and of war overall. As Alison S. Fell, French literature and culture scholar specializing in women’s roles at war, writes, “these male bodies are truly in a space of Kristevan abjection, [and they are] often mutilated to the point between the bodily and non-bodily.”²⁴⁰ An environment where amputations occur daily, and where human brain matter leaks out of skulls is not a place where sex and romance would thrive. This description is an example of Darrow’s point regarding the believability of these texts by women. Jacquemaire’s narrator does not offer an idealized fictional account of the war hospital. Rather, in the description of the nurses, the violence they see, and the lack of over-generalizations about the glory of fighting for the nation, the narrator acknowledges the horror of war rather than ignoring it in favor of a romanticized image.

It is through the nurse’s caregiver duties, rather than her medical duties, that romanticization occurs. Nurses and mothers alike share one important similarity in

²³⁹ Jacquemaire 58

²⁴⁰ Alison S. Fell. “Fallen Angels? The Red Cross Nurse in French World War I Discourse.” *The Resilient Female Body: Health and Malaise in Twentieth-century France*. Ed. Maggie Allison and Yvette Rocheron. Bern: Peter Lang, 2007. 33-50, 45.

women's roles and women's heroism in the war, as they sit by the bedside of an injured man and act with bravery and courage, rather than crumbling at the sight of the injuries. This type of heroism occurs in Roger's novel where the narrator depicts a mother sitting by her injured son's bedside and listening to his cries as the most important female heroism.²⁴¹ What this mother's task implies is a helpless female heroism, in contrast to the description of heroism provided by Jacquemaire's narrator, where a nurse rescues her patients from bomb blasts. This mother cannot do anything to help her son, who is in the hospital. Her heroism requires passivity, compared to the usual markers of male war heroism, which require activity.

Even when injured, there are male characters that take on an active role in contrast to female passivity. With a recent amputation, a soldier engages in an active role to comfort his nurse, and in doing so, takes over her position as caregiver. She had just learned of the surgery and feels quite emotional about its occurrence, making this nurse in particular completely, and passively, helpless. The soldier with the new amputation, normally a figure that should be more vulnerable, dominates the situation by reversing the nurse-patient role: "Il vit son mouvement de surprise navrée. Il éprouva le besoin de la consoler. 'Oh, madame, dit-il, ma jambe était toute brisée.' Et c'était comme s'il lui avait dit: 'Ne vous tourmentez pas, ce n'est pas la peine... puisqu'on ne pouvait faire autrement.'"²⁴² The nurse cannot face his amputation, having thought the doctors would be able to avoid the surgery, and upon seeing him without his leg, she is the one who needs emotional care and support. The soldier with the amputated leg takes on that role,

²⁴¹ Roger, 2 18

²⁴² Roger, 2 10

which generally goes to the nurse or the mother, thereby reversing gender roles.

Compared to the perspective of Jacquemaire's narrator, Roger's narrator emphasizes the feminine side of nursing rather than the masculine side. This reversal of gender roles does provide a space for a man to act heroically in a less active way. This soldier takes on the woman's task of the nurse, in the emotional sense, whereas usually in this text, the nurses remain the emotional caretakers of the soldiers. Along with the soldier's compassion, the nurse accepts a more passive position, making this compassion arguably masculine, as it is the dominant role in this scenario. The soldier is thereby able to negate his own vulnerability due to limb loss by taking charge of the situation and comforting her. He avoids this infantilization by extending comfort to the woman who otherwise would nurse him.

In taking on this compassionate yet dominant role, the amputated soldier creates an alternative masculinity that resists the vulnerability and subsequent infantilization from his injury. This masculinity, therefore, does not necessarily betray the martially masculine image he is called upon to embody, as it involves him protecting a woman. English literature scholar Carol Acton articulates this contradiction in roles well in her article on injury and masculinity in nurses' World War I writings, framing her argument around the required actions of the nurse and the difficulty she has maintaining a proper gender image while nursing injured men during the war. She writes that "On the one hand, the nurse is required to affirm the masculinity of the soldier wounded in the service of his country, an act that carries an erotic undertone; on the other hand, she is confronted with the emasculating nature of the wounds themselves and with her position as part of

the war machine that causes them.”²⁴³ The nurse in Roger’s text, through taking on a more vulnerable position than the extremely vulnerable soldier, flawlessly maintains some sense of the required gender binary of the time. Though this soldier’s amputation is potentially emasculating, her vulnerability allows him to be in a relative position of power.

While Jacquemaire’s narrator emphasizes the difficulty of nursing, articulating the horror that women in this role must have felt, and the active nature of their heroism, Roger presents nursing in a seemingly less violent light, where passivity, even among the nurses, is the way women attain war glory. Though *Les carnets d’une Infirmière* does describe several serious injuries, amputations, and difficult deaths, the nurse in Roger’s series mainly expresses feelings of maternal compassion for the soldiers to whom she tends. The maternal figure should be passively supportive of the injured men, and must not betray her own suffering at the sight of the soldiers’ suffering. In *Carnets*, the narrator characterizes the women as taking on the role as supporter as well, where, regardless of the few moments of exhaustion and vulnerability, they articulate the sentiment—through their interactions with the soldiers—that fighting for France is a great adventure for the men, rather than a huge sacrifice. In contrast to Barbusse’s *Le Feu*, which takes into account the realities of the death of an individual soldier who inevitably remains unrecognized,²⁴⁴ Roger’s narrator romanticizes the notion of “la gloire

²⁴³ Carol Acton. “Negotiating Injury and Masculinity in First World War Nurses’ Writing.” Fell, Alison S. and Christine E. Hallet. *First World War Nursing: Visions and Revisions*. New York: Routledge, 2013. 123-138, 126.

²⁴⁴ See Chapter three for analysis on the unrecognized sacrifice of war.

anonyme.”²⁴⁵ Her expression implies that the lack of recognition for one’s sacrifice is positive, rather than negative as portrayed by Barbusse. This is the nurse’s role according to Roger’s narrator, to make the soldiers feel relevant, regardless of the true anonymity of their sacrifices. Roger’s narrator, in contrast with Jacquemaire’s, thus emphasizes the value of the nurse’s passive support of her patients.

Continuing to relate the positive aspects of war, Roger’s narrator describes what war means for the soldiers:

Nos soldats ne se battent pas pour satisfaire une ambition nationale, qui serait d’ailleurs légitime, ils ne se battent pas pour des raisons de haine et de vengeance. Ils se battent pour quelque chose de plus grand encore que la patrie. Ils se sacrifient pour que vienne le règne de la paix. Combien de fois ne m’ont-ils pas dit, nos petits soldats, ‘Ce sera la dernière guerre...Nos enfants ne verront plus de telles choses...’²⁴⁶

This uplifting image of war is precisely what Darrow was referring to in her description of women’s war writing as taking on a glorifying stance. This is the notion of war for peace, which Céline takes on in a distinctly different tone in his *Voyage*. When he promotes violence, it is also for peace, but his description of it is cynical and angry, highlighting how contradictory this notion is, compared to the image here, where peace is a noble ambition and war will lead to ever-lasting peace. For Céline, peace was not noble, but rather a surrender to the enemy—he did not care who won the conflict, so long as the fighting ended. In Roger’s series, there is no acknowledgment of the contradiction

²⁴⁵ Roger, 2 17

²⁴⁶ Roger, 1 42-3.

embedded in the idea of “a war for peace.” At the end of volume 2 of *Carnets*, just as in the quotation above from volume 1, the narrator expresses with certainty that the younger generation will learn from the older one, “Tout ce sang, toutes ces larmes, ces souffrances stoïquement supportées, tout cet héroïsme, c’est l’héritage fécond que nous transmettrons à nos fils encore trop petits pour se battre. Ceux-là connaîtront la valeur de la vie et la valeur du bon droit...Ils se souviendront. Et l’avenir ainsi racheté par l’effroyable calvaire ouvrira une ère nouvelle...”²⁴⁷ The hope in these words implies that future generations will learn lessons to avoid war, creating a new era of peace. Perhaps necessary to maintain hope, these sentiments are clearly unrealistic in a historical perspective, and even without the knowledge of what came later for the French, are quite sentimental.

These sentiments, in their hope, forget the wars, with all the similar hope for future peace, that came before. In saying, “Combien de fois ne m’ont-ils pas dit, nos petits soldats, ‘Ce sera la dernière guerre...Nos enfants ne verront plus de telles choses...,’”²⁴⁸ her reference to this as the “last war” suggests wars that came before, signaling that this institutional knowledge of previous wars is not put to use.

Acknowledging that others in the past have said these same words before, she repeats this certainty, not acknowledging that war keeps occurring. She also infantilizes the soldiers here, and takes communal ownership of them, referring to them as “nos petits soldats.” The possessive pronoun she uses to refer to them takes the men outside of their own selves and into a collective national possession, implying that their role and their

²⁴⁷ Roger, 2 48

²⁴⁸ Roger I, 42-3

contribution are bigger than themselves as individuals. The nurse thereby elevates the soldiers beyond themselves, but also takes away each soldier's individuality and personal stake in his own survival. These words further the superficial romanticization of this war as one that will alter the nature of future human conflict, but are belied by war at the same time by reminding the reader of the never-ending cycle of war violence.

There is in this novel even an idealized version of suffering, and an insistence on the redemptive nature of sacrifice for these soldiers and nurses. Roger's narrator expresses a romanticized version of pleasure gained through her nursing, in spite of its connection to violence, "À travers toute cette souffrance, au fond de toute cette souffrance, il y a comme une force et une douceur, oui presque une joie, une grande joie déchirante, qui d'heure en heure me soutient et m'exalte."²⁴⁹ Thus the suffering that war brings out (though for whom, she does not specify) uncovers a sense of positivity for her. This is one of the ways in which she justifies war, injuries, and deaths—justifications that are separate from the need to protect the nation. Furthermore, she claims that this suffering is beneficial for men, "Les hommes, quand ils sont bien portants et heureux, ne songent le plus souvent qu'à leur intérêt et à leur plaisir. Tandis qu'à présent cette atmosphère nouvelle les révèle tout autre..."²⁵⁰ Generally, the war has made the men well behaved.²⁵¹ She sees the silver lining. While these men are horribly injured, at least they are more civilized. Roger's nurses represent the eternal optimism that allows them to avoid revealing and recognizing any negativity about the futility of war. The notion

²⁴⁹ Roger, *I* 6

²⁵⁰ Roger, *I* 6

²⁵¹ Roger, *I* 15

that men become more polite through war has implications for masculinity. War, a test of manhood, in the end reveals masculine and male vulnerability, a state that is supposed to stay hidden. The soldiers perhaps no longer see themselves as dominant because of their injuries. Their new reality may or may not demoralize them. At the very least, according to this nurse, they do become more docile, in other words, less martially masculine. This interpretation contradicts the belief that war makes men in the martially masculine sense, and in making this claim, the nurse unintentionally contradicts the war myth. Darrow points out that Roger's text does not reconcile the reality of war with the rhetoric. While this reading holds true on the surface due to the overt romanticization of the conflict, there are ways to see a dismantling of the war myth within the text through the narrator's representation of the men from the nurses' perspectives.

Regardless of whether or not this narrative acknowledges the destructive nature of war, Roger's narrator demonstrates women taking on their "proper" roles with pleasure, in spite of the traumatic experiences that occur for the soldiers and for the nurses. This narrator whitewashes the trauma more significantly than Jacquemaire's narrator does, yet Darrow points out that Jacquemaire's narrator does not suggest pacifism altogether.²⁵² Rather, the narrator concedes that "il faut acheter la victoire."²⁵³ The vocabulary here—the use of the word "acheter"—provides additional complexity. It requires one to think about the currency used to "buy" victory—the lives of the nation's men (and now women). The economics of war are based on the currency of human life. The statement does not necessarily glamorize the war, but it does not call for pacifism. Given

²⁵² Darrow, *Women* 154

²⁵³ Jacquemaire 278

Jacquemaire's overall acknowledgment that war has consequences that are unappealing, this final statement on the importance of victory falls in line with the rhetoric required of women at the time. The role of the characters in the novels engages with the necessary female rhetoric of war, which encourages war, in spite of or regardless of its consequences by fully endorsing the war myth of self-sacrifice, especially for men.²⁵⁴ Each narrator represents the nurse's role differently. The perspective in Jacquemaire's text provides an image of the nurse in more medical terms, while Roger's novel portrays the nurse as a more distinctly maternal caregiver. Nevertheless, both perspectives on the role of the nurse manage to offer suitable ways to take apart the war myth, though Jacquemaire's is more overt.

Injured and dying masculinities

Faced with injured and dying men, the nurses in both texts take on the role of mother, not only through their nursing, but also through the way in which they infantilize the soldiers. This intersection between the mother's and the nurse's tasks exists not only through the traits they have in common, but also through the notion of civic duty. A powerful association between maternity and civic duty had long existed, and war extended this duty to nursing.²⁵⁵ Thus, nursing simply became an extension of the civic charge of mothering. Throughout Roger's text, the narrator comments on the soldiers' child-like faces. In the daily routine moments, during a meal, the narrator of *Carnets* sees herself as a mother to the men, "Je vais, je viens autour d'eux. Je coupe leur pain, leur

²⁵⁴ Darrow, *Women* 153

²⁵⁵ Goldberg 2

viande, j'étends les serviettes sur le drap. J'éprouve, à les voir manger, la joie d'une mère qui regarde ses fils convalescents."²⁵⁶ She tends to their needs, cutting their food as she would for a child who is not yet able to use a knife. This interaction between the nurse and the soldier is a powerful contrast to the eating scene in *Le Feu*, where the men simply devour their food quickly and without consideration for manners or neatness, as if they are animals.²⁵⁷ Those men were taking on the qualities of basic instinct while in the trenches. In contrast, in the hospital depicted in the *Carnets*, the men are now injured. War has left them in varying degrees of disability, and within this reduced ability, they have taken on the qualities of a child. Either way, while war is said to turn boys into men, what we see here is that it in fact does the opposite. It reduces men to regress towards beings of limited abilities and intelligence—they develop in reverse. The narrator of *Carnets* articulates it outright, even, "Il me semblent redevenus des enfants."²⁵⁸ She acknowledges that they have gone back to the state of a child, implying that war changed them.

The nurse's recognition of regression works subtly against the war myth. The war transformed these soldiers, but not in the way they should have been transformed. They were less physically and emotionally vulnerable before the war. Rather than coming out of the war embodying the traits of martial masculinity, they emerged from it as children, due to the vulnerability individuals in war must inevitably face. In returning to a child-like state, these men revisit the position of the most vulnerable human being in society,

²⁵⁶ Roger, *I* 14

²⁵⁷ See Chapter three for more analysis of this scene.

²⁵⁸ Roger, *I* 14

for not only are children the most vulnerable, their vulnerability is the most acceptable one. Vulnerability in men, especially martially masculine warrior men, is the least acceptable. Because of their injuries, they are incapable of inhabiting a space of vulnerability while being martially masculine—there is too much contradiction. Thus, they go to extremes by returning to childhood, allowing them to heal and to express a more acceptable vulnerability.

The narrator sees that war initiates this reversion back to childhood, yet she is blind to this negative outcome of war. That is to say, she acknowledges and articulates this regression in the men, but does not see it as negative; rather, she revels in it in a motherly way. The narrator explains, “Les héros qui se sont si vaillamment battus reprennent, lorsqu’ils sont blessés, leur âme de tout petit garçon.”²⁵⁹ War overall does not cause this revision, but injury from war does. The soldiers’ bravery in fighting led to injury, which led to this child-like state. The consequences of war, and arguably not war itself, are what make men children rather than making children men. One can then still claim that war makes men, but to my mind, if the likely consequences of war turn men into child-like figures, this claim of manliness from war is harder to sustain.

The narrator does continually refer to this theme of men who become child-like because of injury, indicating its importance. She writes generally of the soldiers,

Leur premier cri, leur seul appel, jailli des profondeurs ignorées de leur être où vivait encore le petit enfant qu’ils furent un jour, la supplication unanime qui monte des champs de bataille, exhale des corps étendus, elle est toujours la même, pareille à celle qu’ils jetaient dans leurs peines de

²⁵⁹ Roger, 3 10

gamins, en face des périls imaginaires; le cri de suprême défense, l'imploration à celle qui ne fit jamais défaut: 'Maman!' Les hommes durs et silencieux, qui refoulent leurs tendresses, les braves qui ont plaisanté jusqu'au dernier instant 'Au secours ! maman...'.²⁶⁰

The child has been dormant inside of these men, and injury brings this child out once again. Not only do these men return to childhood after the battlefield, but there is also an idealization of motherhood, since the mother is “celle qui ne fit jamais défaut.” The men call out, “Maman...Ma maman...Et les mains des femmes courbées sur lui effleuraient son front, s'efforçant de lui donner l'illusion de la caresse maternelle.”²⁶¹ Rather than criticize, the nurses happily indulge the men, playing the role of the mother. Rarely is there a moment when the men call out for their fathers, suggesting that these men do draw a line within their vulnerability. The implication is that it is okay to call out for a woman, but to call out for a man would be somehow unacceptable. In Jacquemaire's narrative, the narrator describes one soldier who calls out for his father, a cry that is sharply different from the rest of the men's cries. The narrator offers no commentary or judgment on these cries, other than to remark that in every other instance, the soldiers cry out for their mothers.²⁶² Arguably, this is because the father figure is not, in terms of acceptable forms of masculinity, a compassionate, nurturing figure, while the mother is.

The narrator glamorizes the role of the mother while idealizing this reversion to childhood, even though it is not in the best interest of the nation for the soldiers not to function as adult men—hence the nation's emphasis on martial masculinity. This

²⁶⁰ Roger, 5 5

²⁶¹ Roger, 3 7

²⁶² Jacquemaire 146

reversion is against the mission of the military, which intends to create a citizenry of strong, masculine men.

The nurses in Roger's text do not only see the French soldiers as children. In fact, the tendency for these women to infantilize their patients extends to the Germans who wind up in a section of the French hospital. Their infantilization serves as an equalizer between "enemies."²⁶³ The narrator writes, "Eux aussi nous font l'effet d'enfants, ces grands garçons blonds et blancs, si docilement couchés, si faibles et dolents, ces géants barbus dont les yeux bleus s'éclairent et sourient lorsque nous essayons de retrouver des phrases allemandes."²⁶⁴ In comparing the French and the German soldiers using similar terms, specifically with *eux aussi*, the narrator confirms the arbitrariness of war and of borders. An injured soldier is vulnerable, rather than an evil force, regardless of his position in the conflict.

The main contradiction found in these soldiers' reversions to childhood is when their own families and their own children come to visit. In these moments, the reader views the men's supposed child-like state through the visits from the men's own children. Practically speaking, one cannot have children and be a child all at once. One father-soldier protects a child from the horrors of war, not wanting her to see him in such a weak state, relying on the excuse that the journey is too long to allow her visit.²⁶⁵ Though he wants to see his daughter, his desire to shield her is stronger. This man's

²⁶³ I use quotes around this word to express that on an individual level, without national/political influences, these men would not be enemies. They are enemies in theory, and only in practice through war and national obligation.

²⁶⁴ Roger, 3 30

²⁶⁵ Roger, 1 26

recognition of his child's vulnerability forces him temporarily to ignore his own. He is more in line with requirements of martial masculinity when he faces his children than when he faces his injuries.

The reality is, though, that these men are not children, as they have now witnessed and can fully understand the consequences of war in a way that an infant cannot. This situation is made clear by a family with a newborn visiting a wounded soldier:

“L'expression placide du nouveau-né contraste avec l'angoisse des trois visages autour de lui.”²⁶⁶ The real child does not understand the meaning of the war hospital. The soldier crying out for his mother does so because he is in pain, and to be sure, he acts out of instinct. Nevertheless, the presence of this newborn demonstrates that these men are not at all children, though they may take on child-like rhetoric and expressions in the face of pain and death. Though reduced to a bare state of abjection, they are ultimately aware of their situation in a way that a newborn is not.

The presence of multiple family members in the hospital is rare, as is the image of infant as a contrast to the injured soldier. We mainly see interactions between a mother and her injured son. In the fifth volume of *Les carnets*, the narrator takes the mother-child/soldier bond a step further, engaging with the question of ownership and duty. She describes a dialogue between a mother and her injured soldier son, “Maman...j'ai bien fait mon devoir...’ ‘Mon petit, je suis fière de toi...je t'ai donné à la France...Maintenant tu n'es plus qu'à moi seule...Tu ne me quitteras jamais...”²⁶⁷ The soldier, according to the mother's words, never had agency. He belonged to his mother, she gave him to

²⁶⁶ Roger, 2 13. The “trois visages” are those of the injured soldier's family members.

²⁶⁷ Roger, 5 6

France, temporarily, to fight, and now he has returned to her. This is reminiscent of a bride being transferred from her father's ownership to her husband's, putting the soldier in a feminized role, and the mother, though maternal, as more masculine as an owner, as the one in control of the son, and even possessing the injured son.

The narrator, though maintaining the war myth of self-sacrifice and the necessity of violence for peace, does not demonstrate a belief in the myth of masculinity within war. Although there are moments of concern regarding an injured soldier's worth in basic "masculine" terms (his strength, and his ability to provide), the lack of personal agency for the soldier throughout the novel goes contrary to any notion of martial masculinity. Children, through their state of dependence, are feminized (i.e. weakened), and mothers, though the culture usually dictates that they act with maternal femininity, arguably do inhabit a certain masculine space in their ability to have dominance and authority over their children. There is not the same emphasis on the mother's dominance and authority as on the father's, but the potential power dynamic exists simply because of the child's need to rely on the adults. Just as the parents dominate the child, the State dominates the soldier, demonstrating a weakness in martial masculinity. Further undermining any notion of martial masculinity, this mother-soldier scene suggests that the State only has any level of control over the man because he is "on loan" from his mother. Within this scenario, the man, who as a soldier is supposed to be martially masculine, is never his own, even before his injury.

Even while these men are howling in bed, yelling for their mothers, Roger's text attempts to glorify war through an interpretation of the experience, noting that "Chacun

de ces hommes a eu sa glorieuse aventure.”²⁶⁸ The narrator praises the men as heroes and martyrs for the cause of peace: “C’est pour elle que nos hommes donnent leur sang et que nos villes acceptent le martyre: la paix,”²⁶⁹ yet also describes them as children. The portrayal of these men as children serves as a reminder of the existence of vulnerability. The image of the soldier is martially masculine, yet the soldier after war, the injured soldier, shifts this figure from one of strength to one of vulnerability, thereby reminding the reader of the fragility of strength itself.

Judith Butler writes of the difficulty in recognizing a common human vulnerability, along with the necessity to acknowledge it.²⁷⁰ She identifies the contradiction inherent in vulnerability and the ways in which individuals handle vulnerability when faced with it. Recognition of the vulnerability that one has in common with an enemy is surely a difficult task. One of the nurses represented in Roger’s text sees the German soldiers’ vulnerability and recognizes that it is no different from that of the French soldiers. This recognition is a textual articulation of Butler’s point that we must attempt “to protect others from the kinds of violence we have suffered.”²⁷¹ To interpret Butler’s arguments within Roger’s text, the “we” in Butler’s statements translates to “the French” in Roger’s text. The narrator in Roger recounts the story of a nurse, Marthe, who did not accept this shared vulnerability when encountering German soldiers, but rather was of the opinion that “Il ne sont plus nos frères... Ils ne sont

²⁶⁸ Roger, *I* 22

²⁶⁹ Roger, *I* 42

²⁷⁰ Butler, *Precarious Life* 30.

²⁷¹ Butler, *Precarious Life* 30

presque plus des hommes....”²⁷² Upon meeting a French soldier who has to have his leg amputated due to an injury he sustained while trying to save his German prisoner from shellfire, Marthe demonstrates her rejection of any shared vulnerability between this soldier and his German prisoner, asking, “Mais pourquoi ne vouliez-vous pas que cet Allemand, votre ennemi, fût tué?”²⁷³ The French soldier, having clearly recognized the German’s vulnerability as similar to his, and thus having wanted to protect him from violence, expresses shock at Marthe’s cruel insistence on violence towards the German. He comments, “Comment vous, vous me demandez cela, vous, une infirmière, qui portez la croix de Genève sur votre poitrine? [...] Ce sont des pauvres diables...des hommes comme nous....”²⁷⁴ In accepting this shared vulnerability, and in wanting to protect his enemy from shared violence, this soldier rejects his soldierly role, which implies a rejection of martial masculinity as his position in the war focuses so heavily on these traits. The ability to kill the enemy is the goal of the imposition of martial masculinity. What is a fierce warrior if not someone able to kill the appropriate person? The military wants the soldiers to be able to recognize shared vulnerability within their own troops, a recognition that encourages heroism. Yet conversely, the military would discourage soldiers from recognizing the same common vulnerability in the enemy. What we see in the actions of the soldier who does help his enemy is that, when it comes to recognition of shared helplessness, the lines of nationality are irrelevant. This soldier recognized the need for rescue in a fellow soldier, regardless of his national origin.

²⁷² Roger, 3 36

²⁷³ Roger, 3 42

²⁷⁴ Roger, 3 42.

There exists a contradiction when accepting a common vulnerability, indicating an acceptance of one's own vulnerability, and thereby rejecting a main principle of martial masculinity. The interaction between the nurse and the soldier reverses stereotypical gender roles. The nurse must be empathetic and motherly towards everyone she comes across, as demonstrated by the actions of the narrator when encountering injured German soldiers in the hospital, while the soldier must be unforgiving and fierce towards his enemy. This soldier's actions demonstrate how he is, as Butler puts it, "given over to the other."²⁷⁵ When helping the enemy leads to the soldier's injury, this moment highlights for the reader the closeness of shared vulnerability. Both men, French and German, are in a space of violence, a space where they are at risk, yet they are not supposed to understand each other as inhabiting that space in the same way. The French soldier should be either uncaring toward or unaware of the vulnerability of his "enemy" and vice versa. Yet this French soldier recognized that they shared a vulnerability, obvious because of their situation, but not caused by that situation. The fact that their vulnerability is shared is related to the origins of that vulnerability, which does not originate in that space of shellfire, where there is an attempt to exclude and refuse the shared origins of vulnerability. Rather than stem from war, to emphasize a passage from Butler, this vulnerability, "emerges with life itself [...] it precedes the formation of 'I.'"²⁷⁶ Were this vulnerability not shared from the start, their "side" in the conflict would take precedent. Their culture and their upbringing, either French or German, would dominate.

²⁷⁵ Butler, *Prekarious Life* 31

²⁷⁶ Butler, *Prekarious Life* 31. For a fuller version of this citation, see Chapter one.

However, this is not the case; rather, the soldiers exist in a common vulnerability that the violence of war accentuates, but that originates with life itself, and the basic “condition of being laid bare from the start.”²⁷⁷ The key for the soldiers who reach across enemy lines is a recognition of this initial vulnerability, which war requires they ignore. One cannot easily exist simultaneously both in states of martial masculinity and vulnerability. In recognizing the German’s vulnerability, this French soldier depicted in Roger’s narrative recognizes his own vulnerability. Does this acceptance remove him from a martially masculine position (presuming he was already in this position)? In terms of purely physical characteristics, the loss of his leg is a factor in his masculine status. War wounds are part of the warrior badge of honor, but amputations go beyond that, as is evident in the constant concern of what the amputated men will do to make a living—a prime factor in masculinity as a condition for being a provider. It would seem, then, that a recognition of vulnerability, either within oneself or within another, especially the enemy, puts one at a disadvantage in terms of basic survival and strength. While Butler praises and encourages the recognition of vulnerability, in situations of conflict it is not helpful. There is some logic to the emphasis on martial masculinity, including its rejection of vulnerability, in war and in violent conflict. The novel suggests the consequences of ignoring the sides in the conflict, the opposition between comrade and enemy, making the French soldier into a traitor. Yet the novel also shows that the nurse’s evocation of bodily punishment for an act of mercy is excessive within the space of the hospital. This particular soldier lost his leg because of his acknowledgment of a

²⁷⁷ Butler, *Precarious Life* 31

common vulnerability with his enemy, and as a result, he became more vulnerable himself through his injury. The significance of this scene, then, goes beyond simply acknowledging the vulnerability of these two soldiers. The French soldier's injury reflects the injuries of all the French soldiers we meet in the text, while the German soldier's injury stands in for all of the German soldiers we do not meet, for surely he cannot be the only one. His injury forces an acknowledgment of vulnerability across borders.

These men exist in a very vulnerable space, yet the nurses do not describe it as such. The narrator does not comment on the divergence between the martial masculinity (necessarily not vulnerable) and the injury. Rather, she is more inclined to set the gruesome images in contrast to the male body, which she describes in terms of masculinity. She writes, "Un corps maigre et musclé, les côtes dessinées très nettes et soulevant la peau, et la poitrine trouée d'une large plaie d'où sortait le drain."²⁷⁸ This soldier's body is impressive, but then suddenly the tone shifts, revealing the injury where the hole in his body represents a hole in his masculinity. The description serves to separate the two areas of the body. The muscled part feels oddly disconnected from the major injury, demonstrating the incongruity of seeing martially masculine bodies injured. Yet these bodies are vulnerable to injury, a reality that creates a tension between martial masculinity and war. Injury, if serious enough, can destroy martial masculinity.

How does a culture reconcile the terms of the injured masculine body? Does it no longer qualify as masculine, or does only part of it, the uninjured part described, still

²⁷⁸ Roger *I*, 24

qualify? Arguably, these bodies are meant to be mutilated, that is the known reality of war.²⁷⁹ Yet on an individual level, this “goal” of war injury contradicts the rhetoric that those in power give to the soldiers to entice them to enlist. They do not get citizens to join the military by telling them of the possibility, and even likelihood of, bodily mutilation, but rather of the patriotic glory.

While war wounds and scars show that a man is battle-tested, a sure-fire marker of masculinity, injuries that are more destructive seem to have the opposite effect. Physical markers are important in the social understanding of sex and gender. Masculinity and disability studies sociologist Thomas J. Gerschick, quoted by Brenda M. Boyle in her study of masculinity in Vietnam War narratives, indicates, “bodies operate socially as canvases on which gender is displayed and kinesthetically as the mechanisms by which it is physically enacted. Thus, the bodies of people with disabilities make them vulnerable to being denied recognition as men and women.”²⁸⁰ Even when a soldier is wounded through war, the very mechanism that is supposed to give him a heightened masculine status, certain extreme injuries—amputations specifically—will generate this vulnerability within the individuals’ gendered being.

This vulnerability as expressed through gender roles is particularly evident in the surgeon performing amputation in Roger’s text. Amputation scenes in these “novels [on nursing in World War I] reflect the actual concern of civilians and soldiers, including difficulties of life at both the front and the rear and the adjustments these new situations cause people to make in their lives and attitudes. Among these, the integration of the

²⁷⁹ Acton 124

²⁸⁰ Gerschick quoted in Brenda M. Boyle. “Phantom Pains: Disability, Masculinity, and the Normal in Vietnam War Representations.” *Prose Studies: History, Theory, and Criticism* 27.1-2 (2006): 93-107, 93.

veteran into a reconstructed France is an especially important issue.”²⁸¹ The novel demonstrates this concern through the surgeon’s consistent questions regarding what the man he is about to amputate does for a living, and depending on the answer, he is able to give some comfort as to his value after having lost whatever limb he is about to lose. The surgeon articulates the concern with a man’s value based on his physical being. None of the amputated male characters in this text occupy professional positions, where their limbs may be considered to be less important to their ability to make a living. Rather, they are most frequently in professions where they need their legs to walk, or their hands to do labor, or both, leaving them vulnerable to job loss and its hefty consequences on perceived masculinity.

Though Roger’s novel does offer a somewhat idealized image of the war that injured these soldiers, the narrator acknowledges the long-term hardship of injury, and the impact injuries can have on a soldier’s identity and on his future life. Considering one particular injured soldier, the narrator notes, “Il ne répond rien, mais je devine ce qu’il pense. Il ne redeviendra jamais l’homme solide qu’il était auparavant, un homme qui gagnait bien sa vie et ne redoutait pas les charges d’une famille.”²⁸² The narrator defines here what it means to a “real man,” an “*homme solide*,” and in doing so, imposes her definition on his presumed thoughts. The ability to make a living while not fearing or dreading the responsibility of providing for a family is, here, the essential part of being a man. The war therefore reduced his ability to be a man in the masculine gendered sense of the term (rather than biological). Though his biological sex remains the same, war

²⁸¹ Goldberg 141

²⁸² Roger, *I* 13

altered his body composition, shifting an important piece of his gender identity. The implication throughout the text is that these injured soldiers will have difficulty readjusting to life post-war, and will often be unable to take on the same role as before the war. Outside of war in everyday life, then, an alternative to martial masculinity is more productive than martial masculinity, in that this alternative serves as a provider who engages in low-risk behavior. In all, martial masculinity is a destructive form of masculinity: destructive of the other, the enemy, and likely of the self. Martial masculinity necessitates risk-taking, which reduces the ability to maintain the position of the provider, which is a required version of masculinity in peacetime. Contrary to martial masculinity, the provider cannot be a risk-taker. The dangers of martial masculinity limit the peacetime masculine image, and thus that image must shift after war. It is thus difficult to make a transition from martial masculinity in war, where the consequences of the risk-taking, like injury, have occurred, to the requirements of a peacetime masculinity.

Being a breadwinner is a key social marker of masculinity, and the romanticization and masculinization of war cannot overcome an inability to provide. One doctor must amputate the arm of a man who works as a caster, therefore very much in need of his arm to continue in his learned trade. The doctor says, “sois tranquille, on te casera bien quelque part; on ne te laissera pas comme ça.”²⁸³ The reassurance, and the acknowledgement that the amputation is serious and a threat to his social, economic, and therefore masculine well-being, is clear in the simple words, “comme ça,” indicating that

²⁸³ Roger, 2 36

this is not a desirable position. The severity of the wound emphasizes the fact that the trope glorifying the masculinity of war wounds only applies to superficial wounds that have no long-term impact on a man's ability to function in society.

Physical injury is not the only way that these soldiers pass into a position of vulnerability. Rather, there are, as sports historian Arnaud Waquet describes in his work on the influence of sports during war, "two types of vulnerability: anthropological vulnerability related to both soldiers' physical precariousness and psychological fragility and social vulnerability related [...] to the questioning of *Poilus'* gender identity."²⁸⁴ An uncertain gender identity, or an inability to conform to the socially prescribed gender identity then leads to psychological distress. Roger's novel does not, however, express the same concern with the psychological impact of war as it does with the physical impact. The narrator describes one soldier as having symptoms of shell shock, "Il a déliré toute la nuit. Il criait que les Allemands allaient le frapper. Il entendait les obus éclater près de lui."²⁸⁵ In this description, the concern for his life after the war, as related to his psychological symptoms, is nonexistent. The more unexpected long-term injury, as we see here, is the one that is largely unseen.

As history has taught us, especially in the aftermath of the Vietnam War up through to the 21st Century wars of the Middle East, these mental traumas can have an even more significant impact on one's ability to maintain employment than do the physical injuries. The emphasis in all these nursing novels is on the physical, on what is visible, rather than on behaviors not related to the body. The notion of "shellshock" was

²⁸⁴ Arnaud Waquet. "Wartime Football, a Remedy for the Masculine Vulnerability of *Poilus* (1914-1919)." *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 29.8 (2012): 1195-1214, 1197.

²⁸⁵ Roger, *I* 36

a new element of war during World War I. These nurses make no reference to it and seem to be unaware of mental trauma as a possibility. This emphasis confirms the importance of the body on an individual's conception of his or her gender identity. To the outside world, it is not one's mental status that matters, but one's physical status that determines placement on the spectrum of gender identity and ability to survive and thrive in the world through the parameters of that identity.

The focus on the bodies of injured patients demonstrates the importance of the body in war and in martial masculinity. These men lose the status of martial masculinity through injury, physically, and mentally as well, reverting to childhood. As a result of injury, the gender roles between the nurses and soldiers do not remain fixed in stereotype, and masculinity and femininity do not necessarily apply to an individual based on their biological sex, but vary based on temporary and ever-shifting power positions. While these narratives push the boundaries of gender roles, challenging them, in the end we see these positions restored and reaffirmed. Nevertheless, these nursing novels offer an introductory way for female writers to push the boundaries of gender roles while still staying within the realm of acceptability for their time period, much as the war allowed women to step out of the private sphere, even if only temporarily.

Colonial soldiers: Race, war, and masculinity

Physical markers of masculinity have added meaning when race is involved. Skin color has historically been a perceived marker of distance between people, and that distance, articulated in these nursing novels as the (in)ability to relate to another, exists in

the war hospital through the nurse's descriptions of her colonial patients. Of all of the texts I have chosen to examine for this dissertation, Roger's and Jacquemaire's are the ones that stand out in terms of their more detailed and lengthy narratives of the Black and Arab colonial soldiers.²⁸⁶ There are some brief descriptions of an encounter with a colonial unit in *Le Feu*, but without any discussion of individual characters or the contemplation of the specific roles colonial soldiers play that are found in the nursing texts by women. In Chapters three and four on masculine hierarchies in and out of the trenches, I engage more extensively with the ways in which the male narrators of texts by male authors encounter race. In this particular chapter, I focus on fictional narratives of injured colonial subjects' masculinities and colonial interactions with French women. There is no indication in Roger's series that the African soldiers had previously encountered any white, French colonizers before the war, or even before their admission to the hospital. Though this lack of interracial interaction is unlikely, the narrative perspective belongs to the French nurses, who do not consider the past colonial experience of these soldiers. These interactions provide an opportunity to examine interpretations of colonial masculinities in relation to and in contrast to interpretations of French white masculinity.

Ronald L. Jackson, II, a scholar of African-American studies and identities, writes in his study of Black masculine bodies that there are many common factors in

²⁸⁶ Since most of the colonial soldiers in these novels are of Black descent rather than Arab, I will focus my analysis of colonial masculinities on examinations of Black masculinity. Specifically, I rely on Fanon as a source for colonial masculine struggle. Distinct from Black masculinities, French Studies scholar Bernadette Dejean de la Bâtie writes on Arab masculinities. She indicates that this specific group struggles with the tensions between the hegemonic masculinity enforced by patriarchy within its own culture and lowered masculine power resulting from colonialism (Bernadette Dejean de la Bâtie. "Manifestations of Serial Mentality in Driss Chraïbi's Detective Stories: Arab-Muslim Masculinity Displayed, Portrayed, and Caricatured." *Nottingham French Studies* 41.2 (2002): 80-89, 83.).

conceptions of masculinities of color and white masculinities.²⁸⁷ There additionally are distinctions in the conception of Black masculinity within itself, as well as the outside conception of Black masculinity, meaning how, specifically in this case, the white women from a colonizing nation narrate Black masculinity. These texts on nursing show a particular side of Black masculinities that does not always adhere fully to colonial stereotypes, such as that of the “African savage.” Though both Jacquemaire and Roger’s narrators employ this image, their descriptions of these soldiers are not fully dedicated to its meaning.

Jackson offers five aspects of Black masculinity: “struggle, community, achievements, independence, and recognition.”²⁸⁸ Within these war narratives, “struggle” is one that stands out in particular. As an influence in identity formation, struggle is a pillar of this theory for Jackson. Following Frantz Fanon but not directly referencing his work within this particular section, Jackson writes that recognition and struggle come together when considering Black masculinities.²⁸⁹ To be sure, Jackson bases his examination of Black masculinities in the African-American context, but through the implied rhetorical connection to Fanon, Jackson’s theory is useful for a broader conception of colonial masculinities and masculinities of color. According to Fanon, the struggle for recognition is essential to Black masculinities, as “le Noir n’a plus à être noir, mais à l’être en face du Blanc.”²⁹⁰ This need for recognition from the other race stems at least partially from the colonizer’s oppression itself. It also originates in the

²⁸⁷ Ronald L. Jackson, II. *Scripting the Black Masculine Body*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2006, 135.

²⁸⁸ Jackson 140

²⁸⁹ Jackson 135

²⁹⁰ Frantz Fanon. *Peau noire, masques blancs*. Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1952, 88.

need for the Black man to demonstrate independence, and throw off the oppressors, through recognition.

Furthermore, Fanon writes that “C’est un fait: des Blancs s’estiment supérieur aux Noirs. C’est encore un autre fait: des Noirs veulent démontrer aux Blancs coûte que coûte la richesse de leur pensée, l’égale puissance de leur esprit.”²⁹¹ Taking on the job of the colonial soldier is an attempt to gain recognition from the colonizers,²⁹² though the role of soldier only serves to show the colonial subject’s value in terms of his physical strength and his bravery.²⁹³ Arguably, however, the colonial subjects’ participation in the war did gain them some recognition from the colonizers, serving as a rite of passage towards European respect.²⁹⁴ Kande Salifou Kamara, a soldier from Guinea who fought in World War I and looked back on the conflict decades later in an interview, believes that any recognition that colonial and later, ex-colonial people have from the French today comes from their willingness as colonial subjects to fight in those earlier wars.²⁹⁵ Regardless of any arguable historical outcome, these nursing novels do not show full recognition of these men by the French nurse narrators, in spite of the men’s sacrifice, fighting and being injured in a war that was not their own. The lack of recognition in these texts does speak to the contradictions within the image of the colonial soldiers at this time. Historian Ruth Ginio, in an article on questions of race and the French military, writes that

²⁹¹ Fanon, *Peau noire* 7

²⁹² L.V. Smith, *The Embattled Self* 43.

²⁹³ While there was this potential “advantage” for the colonized soldiers to enlist, many men did not volunteer but were compelled to join the service.

²⁹⁴ L.V. Smith, *The Embattled Self* 44

²⁹⁵ L.V. Smith, *The Embattled Self* 44

on the one hand, presenting the African soldiers as primitive and naturally violent served French military interests, since it made them more menacing in the eyes of enemies in Europe and in the empire. On the other hand, the soldiers were supposed to be living proof of the success of the French civilizing mission and the supremacy of French colonialism over that of other nations.²⁹⁶

Colonial rule thus forces the colonial soldiers to inhabit this dual space of the civilized savage who remains savage. While the war and the hospital could theoretically serve as a space of recognition due to the intimate nature of the work done there, the narrators of both *Les carnets d'une Infirmière* and of *Les hommes de bonne volonté* do not demonstrate a nuanced understanding of the position of the colonial soldiers within these contradictions.

The reader immediately understands the subject of the final volume of Roger's *Carnet* because of the cover, which is a photograph depicting two Black soldiers (see Appendix B and C).²⁹⁷ Much of this volume tells stories of colonial soldiers tended to by the French nurses. The narrator has some awareness of their humanity as well as limited awareness of their position as colonial subjects of France. Regardless, her vision of these men still coincides with much of the racist rhetoric of the colonial savage, making her interpretation of these men, while more detailed and humane than in other texts I study,

²⁹⁶ Ruth Ginio. "French Officers, African Officers, and the Violent Image of the African Colonial Soldier." *Historical Reflections* 36.2 (2010): 59-75, 60.

²⁹⁷ Roger, 6. The cover image of this volume is a picture of two soldiers. Both B and C show the same image. B is damaged, but has more accurate coloring, while C shows the undamaged cover in black and white. Thank you to Professor Mária Brewer for obtaining the undamaged image from the Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

mostly superficial. To be fair, the character development of soldiers overall in these volumes is lacking in detail. One large difference though, which privileges the white, French soldiers over the colonial soldiers of color, is that the reader learns many of the French men's names, while never learning any of the names of the colonial soldiers.

When a nurse asks for his name, the first colonial soldier whom the narrator mentions answers "Camarade," the same name used for the colonial soldiers specifically in *Le feu*. This term provides at least the illusion of togetherness and mutual understanding between the French men and the colonial men. The narrator explains this term through the emotional stakes attached to it: "[...] ce sentiment de la camaraderie. C'est une sorte d'amitié pratiquée comme une religion [...] le camarade n'est pas aimé simplement pour lui-même. Il représente et incarne aux yeux des autres toute sa section, toute sa compagnie, son régiment."²⁹⁸ Even though she applies this term and her definition of it to the colonial soldiers, there is no sense of irony in the definition—she rarely, throughout the entire text, sees the way in which these colonial soldiers are divided from the French soldiers, likely having a different outlook on their relationship. While she refers to the bond between the soldiers within *sa section, toute sa compagnie, son regiment*, she stops short at referring to the entire military. It does not appear that she attempts, at least, to unify the colonial soldiers with the entire French army, but restricts their camaraderie to smaller units. She continues on her ruminations about the depth of meaning this word contains:

²⁹⁸ Roger, 6 3-4

ce mot évoque pour le soldat toute la vie nouvelle ordonnée par la guerre, les souffrances communes, le danger bravé ensemble. Leur sacrifice pareil les unit plus étroitement que les joies partagées ne les unissaient naguère à leurs compagnons d'école, à leurs compagnons d'atelier et même aux garçons de leur villages, qu'ils appellent de ce joli mot 'leurs pays.' Dans le sentiment de la camaraderie, il y a un peu de leur amour pour la France.²⁹⁹

She does not specify the origin of *le soldat* to whom she refers here, but the cultural implications do not include anything specifically from colonial regions. Her description of the soldiers' life outside of war contains a life familiar to a French soldier. The only reference that makes it clear that she is talking about the colonial soldier is the mention of "leur pays"—a place that is distinct from her own country. Yet the emotional impact of the word *camarade* must factor in that the colonial soldier uses the term to describe himself—either he sees himself as one of the French soldiers, or he simply has limited French vocabulary and is using this word in an attempt to best relate to this French woman. Based on her description, the nurse takes it as the former.

The first more extensive portrait of a colonial soldier that Roger's narrator provides presents her as open to seeing this group of men as particularly valuable, though this sentiment does shift through the course of the volume, perhaps as it would shift through time, with more and more meetings with colonial soldiers. A Tunisian *tirailleur*

²⁹⁹ Roger, 64

has a hand injury from cutting himself on a sardine can.³⁰⁰ This is a condescending reference to more significant war injuries, denoting clumsiness rather than valiant war heroism, and silliness rather than bravery. Every other man up to this point in the *Carnets* has an injury caused by the Germans, while the first colonial soldier that the narrator mentions injured himself while trying to eat.

This soldier's injury represents one end of the soldier spectrum of masculinity. Theoretically, "too little aggression rendered the man at war less than manly, too much brutalized him."³⁰¹ The soldier must find the right balance to avoid falling onto the extreme ends of the spectrum. In his introduction to Fanon's *Les damnés de la terre*, Jean-Paul Sartre frames this tension in terms of Black colonial masculinities and the ways in which these masculinities relate to violence. Rather than having possibilities along a spectrum, however, the colonial subject finds himself from the onset—in confronting France before he joins that nation on the battlefield—in one of two positions. Sartre writes that when this colonial subject faces a French soldier, "s'il résiste, les soldats tirent, c'est un homme mort; s'il cède, il se dégrade, ce n'est plus un homme; la honte et la crainte vont fissurer son caractère, désintégrer sa personne."³⁰² This colonial subject in Sartre's scenario once faced the very same soldiers—and continue to face them at home—who have now become his comrades. With regard to the Tunisian soldier's injury, a cut by a sardine tin positions this particular soldier in the camp of "too little aggression" while typically, the French colonizers saw their subjects in general and

³⁰⁰ Roger, 6 27

³⁰¹ L.V. Smith, *The Embattled Self* 70

³⁰² Jean-Paul Sartre. "Préface." Fanon, Frantz. *Les damnés de la terre*. Paris: La Découverte, 2002. 17-36, 24.

colonial soldiers in particular as brutal and “perversely hyper-masculine.”³⁰³ While it is possible to see soldiers’ masculine position vis-à-vis masculinity and war as existing at the extremes of overly martially masculine or not martially masculine at all, in reality, many of these soldiers exist along a spectrum of masculinities, within complicated interpretations and intersections of masculinities and femininities.

The next Tunisian, also unnamed, has a “true” war injury, but is portrayed as having “le cafard.”³⁰⁴ The narrator then uses the same word, *cafard* (depression), to describe the mental status of a Senegalese *tirailleur* who lost both of his feet.³⁰⁵ While the narrator had previously used this term occasionally to describe French soldiers, she refers to all three colonial soldiers in some type of un-heroic manner in short sequence. The narrator paints a picture with her description of how she sees colonial soldiers, compared to French soldiers. Even though these last two soldiers have serious war injuries, by grouping all three together with this term *le cafard*, the narrator’s interpretation reduces the status of martial masculinity of these men. In spite of many prevalent stereotypes of the time, this narrator does not push the image of these colonial men as hyper-masculine or as intensely violent warriors.

Typically, the portrayal of colonial soldiers in the French army, and colonial subject, in general, has been violent (see Appendix D).³⁰⁶ The violent savage African is

³⁰³ L.V. Smith, *The Embattled Self* 70

³⁰⁴ Roger, 6 28

³⁰⁵ Roger, 6 30

³⁰⁶ This poster, from Klaus Theweleit’s *Male Fantasies*, illustrates the sentiment around French Black soldiers in Germany. This image is of an oversized, mostly nude Black soldier holding several white women in his hands, all of whom have passed out. The soldier stands over a small village, dominating it with his size (Theweleit 94).

an old trope.³⁰⁷ Here, though, the narrator, while directly referring to this soldier as a “savage” (or perhaps, as a former savage due to his injury), largely goes against the notion of the violent savage by describing a situation of extreme vulnerability. The narrator does not portray these colonial men as any more naturally violent than the French patients. Rather, she describes their heroism in bold terms, “Ces soldats africains, par l’héroïsme inouï qu’ils ont montré dans les attaques, selon tous les témoignages, ont bien mérité le nom de camarades, qu’ils ont compris tout de suite, et qu’ils se sont donné.”³⁰⁸ Yet the tone of this description, while it sets these men apart from the Frenchmen, does not give a more powerful impression of violence than the descriptions of the Frenchmen’s heroism. The narrator’s view allows for a vulnerable image of the colonial soldier.

Though this view is an interpretation of the entire group of colonial soldiers, the acknowledgment of their heroism is a form of recognition, specifically one of their collective humanity (even if not of their individuality or of their individual humanity). The social psychologist Aaronette M. White writes on Fanon’s belief about war. She indicates that he emphasizes the colonial subjects’ need to assert “their humanity through a violent confrontation with their oppressors, [...after which] the colonized could achieve recognition of their humanity, which had been denied by their colonizers.”³⁰⁹ Yet the colonial soldiers here assert their humanity by fighting *alongside* their oppressors. This is a contradictory position, as they are obliged to fight. However, through their fighting

³⁰⁷ Ginio 60

³⁰⁸ Roger, 6 31

³⁰⁹ Aaronette M. White. “All the Men Are Fighting for Freedom, All the Women Are Mourning Their Men, but Some of Us Carried Guns: A Raced-Gendered Analysis of Fanon’s Psychological Perspectives on War.” *Signs* 32.4 (2007): 857-884, 857.

and subsequent injury the narrator demonstrates an acknowledgment of them more as “camarades” than they would have outside of the conflict. By fighting, and suffering injuries, the colonial soldiers show a similarity to the French soldiers in their common vulnerability. Though this colonial soldier is a savage in her eyes, he is also a hero—perhaps only because his savagery now has found an appropriate outlet—but nevertheless, there is a general gentleness to the way in which the nurse interprets the colonial soldier’s role and fate after war.

Her interpretation suggests that the colonial soldier has more in common with the French soldier than the colonial subject would have with the French citizen, and to be sure, participation in the war should lead to further recognition of the colonial subject by the colonizer.³¹⁰ War thus shifts the role of colonial subject to one of soldier, including him in the process more by giving him more in common with the French soldiers. Of course, this role shift does ignore the reality that these men are fighting for their oppressor, something that the narrator vaguely mentions. The narrator does so in the context of her continued romanticization of the role of the soldier in general, and of the colonial soldier specifically, writing that these colonial men

ont manifesté les plus belles vertus du soldat: ils ont versé tant de leur sang pour le rachat des provinces envahies et fait preuve d’un si touchant dévouement envers leur frères de France qu’ils ont acquis à tous les leurs, pour l’avenir, quand la paix sera revenue, le droit d’être traités

³¹⁰ L.V. Smith, *The Embattled Self* 44. Whether or not the war lead to such recognition once it ended is debatable. The films *Indigènes* (*Indigènes*. Dir. Rachid Bouchareb. Perf. Jamel Debbouze, Samy Naceri and Roschdy Zem. 2006.) and *Camp de Thiaroye* both speak well to the refusal of financial recognition after World War II, though they do not address the same issues after World War I.

véritablement en camarades: les bons camarades noirs ...les camarades blancs qui les ont vus à l'œuvre et ont partagé leur souffrance, ne sauraient comprendre qu'il en fût autrement."³¹¹

The narrator imposes a relationship on the soldiers as a whole group—she portrays the French and colonial soldiers as brothers. Importantly, this commonality comes through the nurse's interpretation, rather than from French soldiers, and it ignores the reality of institutional influences on the treatment of these colonial soldiers. She heightens the reader's grasp of the impact of war on social groups, all while idealizing the soldier's role. The reference she makes to the soldiers' spilling their own blood eliminates from its tone any connotations of the violence that actually causes this spilling of blood. This narrator is entrenched in supporting the war by elevating its every aspect.

The narrator does note the particular difficulty that the colonial soldier would have in this situation. She writes about the soldier who lost both of his feet,

Ah! combien la nostalgie de ce noir me parut plus tragique encore que les nostalgies de ses camarades français! et sa destinée plus lamentable...Ce pauvre cœur qui ne peut s'épancher...Cet esprit fruste dans lequel ne pénètre aucune des consolations qui soutiennent les autres, ce corps qui était son seul bien, sans doute, et dont il ne pourra plus se servir pour mener sa belle vie libre de sauvage.³¹²

This passage demonstrates the difficulty of being one of the colonial soldiers as opposed to being a French soldier. Yet this sympathy only goes so far, as she plunges into an

³¹¹ Roger, 6 31

³¹² Roger, 6 30

understanding of colonial masculinities of color based largely on typical tropes of the African savage. While she expresses a similar pity for the injured French men as she does for these colonial soldiers, the ending word of *sauvage* complicates her sympathy for the latter. The term *sauvage* combined with the pity-inducing phrases *pauvre coeur* and *esprit fruste* set the colonial soldier's humanity aside, while the last two expressions distance him from martial masculinity, even with the emphasis on physical bodies. The expression *pauvre coeur* even goes so far as to limit the African's mental resources, as it suggest, along with the sentiment of pity, a belief that his heart is lacking in some sense. Martial masculinity requires control, which the savage does not possess.

This scene of a colonial soldier with no feet provides a contrast to other amputation scenes. For the colonial soldiers, the nurse characterizes their bodies as their "seul bien." In such amputation scenes with the French soldiers, there is concern for the men's bodies as tools for their economic survival. Yet with the French soldiers, there is reassurance that they will still be of use, while here, the African without full use of his body has no value. There is no concern for how he earns his living, only a vague mention of his "savage" life. The colonialist rhetoric of the colonial soldier as a savage denies of any notion that the colonial soldier must go home and be productive. This rhetoric implies that there is nothing productive about his existence. To be sure, she is empathetic to his situation, yet her understanding of his former life as a savage life is based in prejudice and historically maintained colonial rhetoric. However, by indicating that he will not be able to return to his former life, she in a way ties him to the French soldiers whom she describes as suffering the same fate.

Nevertheless, even with this similar life experience of war, the colonial soldier cannot recuperate from the war in the same way as the French soldiers because of their pre-war status. The colonial soldiers are already “Other” in this position vis-à-vis the nurses and everyone else around them in this war. The need for recognition is never more powerful. Fanon emphasizes the Otherness of the colonial subject and his need for recognition, writing “Tant qu’il n’est pas effectivement reconnu par l’autre, c’est cet autre qui demeure le thème de son action. C’est de cet autre, c’est de la reconnaissance par cet autre, que dépendent sa valeur et sa réalité humaines. C’est dans cet autre que se condense le sens de sa vie.”³¹³ The need for recognition is thus all-consuming. To my mind, this recognition is sex-specific, and there is a connection between the recognition that the colonial subject seeks and the recognition, and therefore value, of his masculinity, an important factor in a patriarchal society. The way in which the colonizer recognizes the subject is relevant. The Black male subject needs recognition of his humanity, but also of his masculinity. If the colonizer recognized him as hypermasculine, as the colonizer does, the subject falls into a savage, inhuman category. Coded as savage, the colonial soldier is understood already in somewhat hypermasculine terms, making him more vulnerable to this type of categorization than the citizen soldier. Hypermasculinity falls into a category of the inhuman because, as an exaggeration of masculinity, it takes the relevant traits of martial masculinity to the extreme—the ferociousness and the bloodlust of the warrior become animalistic, thereby the lacking the control so important to the humanity of martial masculinity. Martial masculinity requires

³¹³ Fanon, *Peau noire* 176

behavioral balance,³¹⁴ and hypermasculine behavior does not allow for the contradictions and tensions that this balance imposes.³¹⁵

A recognition of the subject as a feminized man, or an infantilized man, another way in which the colonizer sees the colonial subject, is another form of incomplete recognition. The very nature of colonialism, in fact, necessarily imposes feminization or infantilization from the colonizer onto the colonial subject because of the power the colonizer has over the subject. Helping the colonizer win the war only further entrenches these contradictory forms of recognition. Either the colonial soldier is fierce and useful in battle, solidifying the stereotype of the savage, or he runs away like a child, cementing his feminization. It is only in the hospital, after the battle is over, that we see in these texts a small, albeit complex chance at a recognition of the soldier, at least by the nurses. Nevertheless, the struggle of war does not help the colonized subject see himself as an “I.” By participating in war, the colonized subjects attempt to further their goal in locating their “I” amongst their colonizers, as Jackson notes:

while participating in the established dialogic I-Other formation, countless volumes have proven that Blacks had to see themselves as Other; they had to negotiate their identities to survive whether through armed or silent protest, or psychological struggle. In doing so, the risk was, and still is,

³¹⁴ Belkin 4-5. For more information on the contradictory nature of within the practice of martial masculinity, see Chapter three.

³¹⁵ It is important to note that this text does not depict the colonial soldiers as out of control, but rather injured and subdued. Thus my references to the image of the hypermasculine colonial subject do not come from these texts, but rather from the cultural tropes of colonialism.

that Blacks as the social Other found it difficult if not impossible to return to seeing themselves as the I.³¹⁶

Thus, these quiet, injured colonial soldiers, blocked by language, as well as this “psychological struggle” are at a double loss. First, they are in this state of Otherness, but war changes them, physically and emotionally. Thus returning to the state of I (what the narrator, in her view of the colonial subject’s Otherness, incorrectly depicts as their “savage” state) could prove particularly difficult. The narrator points out that the soldier will never return to his savage life. Though misguided in her interpretation of his life before, she is right that he will never get back to his original state. What she does not realize is that his previous state likely does not include this position of himself as an Other, with his Otherness accentuated due to the war, and while it is possible to overcome physical impairment, the psychological damage of war *and* of Otherness will hurt him in his attempt to return to the I.

While we have seen through these texts that the French soldiers are in a precarious position with regard to a traditional martially masculine image, given their injuries and the nurses’ infantilization, the colonial soldiers, because of the stereotypes of the savage African, are situated in a position of an even stronger dichotomy between martial masculinity and passivity. African literature scholar Lyn Innes writes that overall, “colonial and anti-colonial discourses generally tended to narrow concepts of sexuality and set up a sharp dichotomy between an aggressive warrior masculinity and a

³¹⁶ Jackson 59

submissive, passive femininity as the normal gender roles.”³¹⁷ Typically, this dichotomy relates more to a distinction of gender roles between biological men and biological women, but in the case of this war hospital, I see the shifting roles as occurring within the narrator’s interpretation of the colonial patients’ behavior post-injury.

These colonial soldiers undergo a shift in the hospital. Once, based on the stereotype of the African savage, they were aggressive warriors, and now they are submissive and passive, at least symbolically, given their injuries. To be sure, this shift occurs for the French soldiers, going from warrior to patient, but the image of the shift is less striking, as the image of the colonial soldier is one of heightened masculinity over the French soldier. The Senegalese soldier who lost both his feet is the prime example of a passive man—with no feet, no ability to walk, this man is very much at the mercy of whoever will help him. This is not to say that disabled individuals cannot have full, active lives. Rather, during this period, and given the colonial soldier as subject, both narrative and colonial, of a white narrator with ties to and the privileges of colonial power, the lack of feet serves as a mechanism to make the individual less threatening, and more passive than he otherwise would be understood to be by these women.

Though the nurses do not feel threatened by these colonial soldiers, which goes contrary to colonialist rhetoric, they do not come so far as to see the same connection between themselves and the colonial soldiers as they do between themselves and the French soldiers. While the nurses infantilize the French soldiers, it is within the framework of a mother-son relationship, likely because these women see their own

³¹⁷ C.L. Innes. “Virgin Territories and Motherlands: Colonial and Nationalist Representations of Africa and Ireland.” *Feminist Review* 47 (1994): 1-14, 1.

identities in the Frenchmen, being of the same nationality and the same “race.” In contrast, the nurses do not, in any way, infantilize the colonial patients, but rather, position them in a passive light. These men do not talk very much, and do not express wanting to get better in the same way as the Frenchmen do—that is to say, they are more passive in their healing. Though the lack of a common language is the superficial reason for the lack of communication, the limited verbal exchanges between the nurses and the colonial patients also make these men less threatening for the women. This contrast of the ways in which the nurses treat the French soldiers as opposed to the colonial soldiers complicates the usual trope of the infantilization of colonial subjects. Within this specific context, it would be more respectful, and more of a community-based action to infantilize the colonial soldiers alongside the French soldiers. In treating the Frenchmen like their own children, these nurses in a way confirm the white men’s higher position on the socio-racial hierarchy. The significance of an absence of infantilization towards the colonial soldiers is especially important given that infantilization is typically a central way of justifying colonialism. The French nurses, in fact, further Other the colonial soldiers by not infantilizing them, as infantilization of the soldiers is the nurses’ way of demonstrating commonality and kinship with the French men.

Though the narrator acknowledges that, for the colonial soldier, the situation is more difficult than for the French soldier, she does so in a way related to his now broken body, rather than related to the psychological impact.³¹⁸ Not only does this soldier have to fight for his oppressor, but he must participate in the more dangerous offensive

³¹⁸ In general, the narrator ignores the psychological impact of war, be it for the colonial subject fighting for his oppressor, or the effects of shell shock among all soldiers.

missions.³¹⁹ Thus, he is in more danger physically than the average French soldier, and he must fight a war that has nothing to do with his interests. To be sure, many of the French characters depicted in these novels have a similar relationship to the war, as they are generally from the working class but fighting for the rich and the powerful. For the colonial subjects, however, the situation is extreme, as they are even further from the benefits and interests of war, and they are not protecting their own nation, but rather, they are helping their oppressors maintain power. This power then will help France continue to maintain control over the colonies. They are fighting against their own potential independence.

Jacquemaire's novel does more than Roger's to acknowledge the difficulty that the colonial soldiers likely have in fighting for France, though only through brief thoughts on the colonial soldier's interpretation of Europe. The narrator of Jacquemaire's text describes Mme Berton's contemplation of the new colonial arrivals to the hospital as follows:

Madame Berton les considère avec une gratitude attendrie et perplexe. Qu'y a-t-il dans ces cerveaux élémentaires et inintelligibles? Que comprennent-ils des circonstances qui les ont amenés ici? Quelle est leur conception de la France, de l'Allemagne, de la mort, de l'honneur [?] Ils sont terribles dans la bataille et avec nos idées de civilisés nous sommes tentés de chercher au fond de cette ardeur une idée, un projet au moins...Ils se sont admirablement battus et la France n'oubliera jamais ce

³¹⁹ Ginio 64

qu'elle leur doit. Mais ne faut-il voir dans leur vertu guerrière qu'un plaisir de sauvage se battant avec des moyens effroyables, de même que les enfants armés d'un fusil de bois et d'un canon fait d'un tuyau de poêle?³²⁰

With the comment "Qu'y a-t-il dans ces cerveaux élémentaires et inintelligibles?", the narrator represents both Berton's inability to comprehend these men and an accusation of their responsibility in her lack of understanding. Their minds are basic, and as such, incomprehensible. The literature of the time frequently assumed that these injured colonial soldiers did not understand the conflict or the reason for the fighting.³²¹ There is a possibility that Berton's thoughts could enter into the realm of the impact of colonialism on these soldiers, but these thoughts only superficially consider the issue, wondering what they think of France and Germany, and quickly sidestepping the national and political implications with loftier, unanswerable notions of death and honor. The more obvious way in which she questions their understanding of the region is through questioning their understanding of the basic facts of the war and their purpose for being there, an incredibly condescending attitude.

The reader never gets any information from the colonial soldiers on what any of these men feel about these larger questions. The colonial soldiers, contrary to the Frenchmen, have no voice. In the hospital, injured, in a place where they do not speak the language, they are totally without a means of communication, which renders them largely helpless. Contrary to Roger's novel, however, this narrator does represent the

³²⁰ Jacquemaire 160

³²¹ L.V. Smith, *The Embattled Self* 84

infantilization of the colonial soldiers by Mme. Breton, as she compares their enthusiasm in battle with that of “les enfants armés d’un fusil de bois et d’un canon fait d’un tuyau de poêle.”³²² This infantilization is more comparable to the kind that justifies colonialism, suggesting that even while in full battle the colonial soldiers are childish. This type of treatment is distinct from the mother-child kinship relationship present in Roger’s infantilization in that it eliminates kinship, leaving only feelings of condescending childishness. In both novels, the colonial subject injured in war creates a shift away from the stereotype of the frightening colonial subject. Though initially asking for violence from the colonial subjects, in a sense going against the *mission civilisatrice*, World War I tamed the colonial subject, and feminized him through injury and psychological trauma, similar to the impact that the narrator represents the war as having on the French soldiers.

The very first mention of colonial soldiers in Jacquemaire’s novel demonstrates how they have remained animalized yet become passive through war.

Les blessés arrivent toujours. Ce sont maintenant des nègres du Sénégal, du Dahomey, de la côte des Somalis. Ils ont froid. Ils ne parlent pas. Aucun ne semble ‘causer le français,’ disent les infirmiers qui les regardent avec la pitié qu’on accorde aux bêtes malades. Aucun ne rit, ni ne se fâche aux plaisanteries bon enfant des zouaves et des chasseurs d’Afrique qui les interpellent en les nommant *Chocolat* ou *Ben-Cacaouette*.³²³ Bien portant, ils nous souriraient de toutes leurs belles

³²² Jacquemaire 160

³²³ Sylvie Chalaye, scholar of Francophone theater, provides details on the background of the name “Chocolat.” *Chocolat* is likely a reference to one of the first black performing artists in France, whose real name was Raphaël de Leois. Originally from South America, he played a clown in performances in France

dents éclatantes rangées comme à la parade et ce sourire en dirait long.

Mais ils gisent là, abattus comme des arbres, sans personnalité, sans plaintes.³²⁴

Their inability to interact because of the language barrier serves as a pretext to invoke racist interpretations of the colonial soldiers' behavior when the nurses characterize these men in a position between the animal and the human. This lack of language, combined with their injury, renders them apparently passive. Although there could be reasonable explanations for this silence, such as stoicism, that fit the paradigm of martial masculinity, the nurses never offer alternative suggestions outside of those that dehumanize the colonial soldiers. With their beaten bodies, they are nothing, personality-less, and different from the French patients, without complaint. Their smiles, though presumably a positive sign for their well-being, provides the opportunity for the typical racializing description of the "African's brilliantly white teeth," contrasted with their dark skin. Injured, and having helped France, they are still characterized in very similar terms as colonial subjects described in their normal, healthy state, only now their vulnerability takes an important piece of the colonial male stereotype, physical strength, and reduces it to childishness.³²⁵

Due to the colonial soldiers' vulnerable state, the nurses are comfortable examining them more thoroughly than they otherwise might. The narrator describes

until his death in 1917 (Sylvie Chalaye. *Du Noir au nègre : l'image du Noir au théâtre (1550-1960)*. Paris: Editions L'Harmattan, 1998, 397). The use of this name to create an image of the African soldiers serves to maintain a stereotype of colonial individuals, erasing any difference nationality might have on their identities (as de Leois was from South America, and the men represented in this nursing text were not).

³²⁴ Jacquemaire 159

³²⁵ This childishness is related to a lack of power and respect, rather than the child-like interpretation of the French soldiers where the nurses treat them like their own sons.

another injured African character, “un grand nègre entièrement nu se tenait debout et droit contre les planches de la baraque, la tête enveloppée dans des chiffons sanglants. Son attitude était grande et dédaigneuse, ses membres fins et longs. Son visage ne portait ni la déformation ni la boursouffure de la plupart de ceux de sa race. Tout en lui était noble, beau.”³²⁶ His attitude is one of disdain, which is a moral judgment—though the nurse never works to find its cause. With his head in bloody bandages, he is completely at the mercy of the nurses; thus they can still imagine him as a savage when in his prime, simply unable to fulfill that image because of his injury. The nurse imposes her understanding of Africans on him. She glorifies his body while taking down his race, demonstrating a sentiment that the African male body is the highest sign of his masculinity, embodying a contradiction of handsome and ferocious. His noble beauty contrasts with the supposed “deformities” of his “race.”

The stereotype of the colonial soldier, pre-injury, thus fits in with certain aspects of the martial masculine stereotype. He is fierce and brave, ready to kill. We see in Roger’s narrator’s characterization of these colonial soldiers that the colonial man’s masculinity rests completely in his able body, and not at all in his humanity. Even though the nurses still characterize them as savages, their injured bodies allow these women to see the colonial soldiers as vulnerable.

³²⁶ Jacquemaire 162

Conclusion

Though nursing was, in this context, the ultimate demonstration of femininity in a time of war, there is an element of masculine stereotyped behavior that nurses must embody. The consequences of war that the nurses must tend to typically highlight the violent environment of a hospital. Injury means that vulnerability cannot hide, even when the vulnerable individuals are soldiers. Instead, war illuminates the contradictions of martial masculinity, creating an emphasis on the soldier's vulnerability rather than on his strength. These stories also reveal the shifting nature of the possessor of martial masculinity as opposed to the sometimes feminine, sometimes masculine (but not martial) maternal caretaking. At times, the narrator shows the nurses and the soldiers taking on varying roles, depending on which one offers more power in different situations. Indeed, there is a beneficial side to martial masculinity on an individual level. This side becomes evident through the resulting vulnerability—sometimes, as in the story of the French soldier who saved his enemy, it is in one's best interest to maintain the war myth in an attempt to avoid the consequences of war. Of course, bravery itself, an important fact of martial masculinity, inevitably elevates the risk, and so for self-preservation, a soldier must implement martial masculinity wisely and selectively.³²⁷

The colonial soldiers are assumed to have a heightened sense of the vulnerability felt by the French soldiers, though the narrators are not able to grasp fully the colonial men's position. Interestingly, the narrators represent the nurses and the French soldiers as more adept at recognizing the Germans soldiers' humanity than the colonial soldiers'

³²⁷ See Chapter one for the ways in which war texts offer an argument which is completely against martial masculinity in war.

humanity. There is a dispute over calling the Germans “monsters,” but not over referring to the colonial men as “savages.”

The ways in which these nurse narrators characterize the colonial soldiers do not easily fall into a category of “de-humanizing” or “humanizing.” The image the French had of the colonial subject, in combination with the service, though forced, these soldiers provided for France at this time, creates an understanding of this group that is contradictory. While these soldiers were invaluable to the French, dying at a higher percentage than the French soldiers themselves due to their physical position in the trenches,³²⁸ these colonial characters demonstrate the difficulty in reconciling that service with the intense prejudice toward and image of the colonial subject as a “savage.” The violence that was required of these colonial soldiers only served to provide more contradictions. While it emphasized their hypermasculine image, the outcome of that violence was no different, on an individual level, for the colonial soldiers than it was for the French soldiers. Finally, these texts demonstrate that race and gender were significant at the time, as the Third Republic in France, leading up to World War I, “treaded lightly on hierarchies of class and staunchly defended those of gender and race.”³²⁹ The ways in which the nurses treat the French soldiers compared to the colonial ones show that this period saw a close examination of the intersection of race and gender. The consideration that the female characters provide of the role of the colonial soldier compared to the French soldier demonstrate an awareness of racial power dynamics, though without an ability to articulate directly what that difference means to either party.

³²⁸ Ginio 64

³²⁹ L.V. Smith, *The Embattled Self* 125

Rather, the female characters, through their interpretation of the men's injuries and attitudes in the hospital, show the effects of war on the French soldiers and the colonial soldiers as originating from similar trauma, but leading to different ends. The different outcomes that the nurses articulate center on the issue of financial stability for the French soldiers, a concern that is ignored for the colonial soldiers. The focus on employment and breadwinning signals a belief from the nurses that French soldiers have a higher level of responsibility and therefore command more respect. These stories reveal the hierarchical power dynamics as they relate to race as well as to (financial) gendered expectations of men, and those who may not be able to meet those expectations.

Chapter 3: The Community vs. the Individual: Hierarchies of Masculinities in the Trenches

The military as an institution creates a hierarchy through its system of ranks. It separates individuals within the community, initially by distinguishing citizens of any given nation as either civilians or non-civilians, thus agents for the government. In the well-documented literature on wars of the first half of the 20th-Century, men are in the trenches, while as we have seen in the previous chapter, women are more likely located in hospitals or at home. Thus, even though women are participating in the war effort, they are largely out of military ranks, leaving men within the military to create their own hierarchies. These hierarchies are structured and established not only by military ranks but also, because of the single-gender environment, by a hierarchy of masculinities based on how the individual soldiers judge each other. As I have noted earlier in this dissertation, R.W. Connell defines this notion of hierarchies within masculinities with ‘hegemonic masculinity’ at the top.³³⁰

Inside and outside of the military, however, martial masculinity—a type of hegemonic masculinity—is the “dominant paradigm for male authority.” The military being an authoritarian institution at its very core, masculinity serves to provide anyone who embodies it with more authority than he would otherwise have. The stakes of being able to position oneself at the top of a masculine hierarchy are high. In many cultural contexts, to achieve this elevated position, the embodiment of military masculinity is necessary, linking success in war to overall masculine success. The stakes are so high

³³⁰ Connell, *Masculinities* 37

because the ability of an individual to demonstrate “military masculinity may not be about confirming the suitability of their given sex, but masculine status can still be important enough to risk death to attain it.”³³¹ To elaborate on Belkin’s point, martial masculinity is about more than simply showing that you belong to the male biological sex, but rather that you are *un homme, un vrai*, which requires a higher burden of proof than does a biological status. The position of a “real man” requires an enactment of a certain code of male ethics and behavior (which changes based on time and location) and having the corresponding male body is not enough to satisfy these requirements. Participation in war, or even simply an acceptance and embodiment of cultural militarization, consistently serves to meet the requirements of masculinity. War and more broadly militarized culture thus perform the task of masculinizing men. In this chapter, I examine hierarchy within the military and the trenches, whereas in the next chapter, I look at masculine hierarchies in the militarized culture outside of the trenches.

Historically, the end of the 19th-Century and the start of the 20th-Century are moments in which the French nation was well poised to explore questions of hierarchy and manhood within its culture. One particular moment that stands out to articulate this cultural reflection (that comes across more as a panic related to issues of both masculinity and anti-Semitism) is the Dreyfus Affair. As Christopher Forth shows in his book *The Dreyfus Affair and the Crisis of French Manhood*,³³² this controversy has ties to the French conception of masculinity, and I will argue, to hierarchy as well. Stereotypes of

³³¹ Belkin 2

³³² Forth also co-edited a collection of essays with Bertrand Taithe entitled *French Masculinities: History, Politics and Culture*, which I incorporate into my analysis for this dissertation.

the Jews in Europe ranged from the skilled banker and merchant to the feminized intellectual. Within Europe in general and France in particular, Jews were frequently seen as foreigners and therefore potential traitors.³³³ They were viewed as skilled in the fields of business and banking, qualifications that gave them economic power but that also led to anti-Semitic sentiments of untrustworthiness and “huckstering” due to this economic position combined with the general distrust from the French.³³⁴ Though largely financially successful in these industries, the Jewish stereotype and the image of the intellectual as being primarily sedentary—and therefore effeminate—were very similar, and both were criticized due to the new fear, according to Forth, of “the unhealthy [sedentary] lifestyle led by modern people.”³³⁵ Forth argues that the negative stereotype of the Jews at the time of the Dreyfus Affair was “coextensive with the traditional assumption that Jewish men, whether due to age-old customs or to congenital factors, were bookish, sedentary beings, whose weakness, cowardice, and effeminacy rendered them unfit for military service.”³³⁶ Social and cultural forces used the Jews to strengthen the masculine stereotype in European society because society perceived them as embodying the “negative stereotype of men who not only failed to measure up to the ideal but who in body and soul were its foil, projecting the exact opposite of true masculinity.”³³⁷ Forth argues that the Dreyfus Affair occurred within a new modern context, which “entailed profound challenges to conventional assumptions about self,

³³³ Christopher E. Forth. *The Dreyfus Affair and the Crisis of French Manhood*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004, 17.

³³⁴ Forth 42

³³⁵ Forth 11

³³⁶ Forth 18

³³⁷ Mosse, *Image* 6

gender, and society that, insofar as they seemed to erode traditional bases of male authority, were frequently interpreted as assaults on virility itself.”³³⁸ Both Dreyfusards and anti-Dreyfusards, Forth argues, feared modernity.

However, anti-Dreyfusards in particular were considered more fearful of modernity overall, as they “were depicted as being so inured in traditional mind-sets as to be incapable of transcending their outmoded customs, thus evincing irrational and even atavistic tendencies that made them seem hopelessly out of step with the time.”³³⁹ Of course, the Dreyfusards themselves were in a conflicted relationship with modernity as well, yet they did embrace a new version of masculinity that “increasingly privileged mental over physical labor.”³⁴⁰ Thus, the Dreyfus Affair generated a debate on modernity and masculinity that offered ways of hierarchizing individuals based on a notion of cultural progression. This progression is towards a new definition of manhood. In my analysis of the wars as well as the novels, this new definition continues to demonstrate both an alignment with the traditional male ethic cemented by Napoleon and a rejection of it.

The Dreyfus Affair brought into view the rigid hierarchies within the military institution itself, which proved to be a weakness in the conflicts to come. Émile Zola, in his open letter to French President Félix Faure, wrote on the way in which hierarchy was a problem in the case of the Dreyfus Affair which spoke specifically to problems with hierarchy more broadly:

³³⁸ Forth 7

³³⁹ Forth 7

³⁴⁰ Forth 7

Comment a-t-on pu espérer qu'un conseil de guerre déferait ce qu'un conseil de guerre avait fait ? Je ne parle même pas du choix toujours possible des juges. L'idée supérieure de discipline, qui est dans le sang de ces soldats, ne suffit-elle à infirmer leur pouvoir d'équité ? Qui dit discipline dit obéissance. Lorsque le ministre de la Guerre, le grand chef, a établi publiquement, aux acclamations de la représentation nationale, l'autorité de la chose jugée, vous voulez qu'un conseil de guerre lui donne un formel démenti ? Hiérarchiquement, cela est impossible. Le général Billot a suggestionné les juges par sa déclaration, et ils ont jugé comme ils doivent aller au feu, sans raisonner. L'opinion préconçue qu'ils ont apportée sur leur siège, est évidemment celle-ci : 'Dreyfus a été condamné pour crime de trahison par un conseil de guerre, il est donc coupable ; et nous, conseil de guerre, nous ne pouvons le déclarer innocent ; or nous savons que reconnaître la culpabilité d'Esterhazy, ce serait proclamer l'innocence de Dreyfus.' Rien ne pouvait les faire sortir de là.³⁴¹

Zola's argument suggests that hierarchy is an institutional trap, which by its nature cannot admit mistake without destroying its power. A court martial, as Zola references, cannot be fair because of the nature of hierarchy, an issue which I examine in this chapter through the fictionalized court martial in Stanley Kubrick's *Paths of Glory*. Hierarchy creates an imbalance, which is in opposition to fairness, thereby creating the potential for a sense of disloyalty within the ranks of the military. This potential lack of loyalty

³⁴¹ Zola 23-6

originates from the soldiers seeing that they are not always going to be treated fairly, even though they are sacrificing so much for this institution that has tremendous power over them and could potentially discipline them in an unjust manner.

Furthermore, the Dreyfus Affair demonstrates the State's interest in policing the citizenship. Judith Surkis lays out the ways in which the State policed and enforced admission into citizenship and therefore the national hierarchy in her book, *Sexing the Citizen: Morality and Masculinity in France, 1870-1920*. She notes that the State wanted to emphasize that the soldier is the best kind of man in any situation, given the way in which the State expects that behavioral mold of all men. The State wanted all men to fit into a paradigm of masculinity, and the Dreyfus Affair demonstrated the ways in which Jews, as well as other groups perceived as effeminate, did not fit.

The State, Surkis argues, set forth to "sex" the citizen. The "sexing" of the citizen occurred because of the new ways in which men were able to exercise political rights, with the implementation of universal male suffrage. It was "because all adult French men had become citizens [that] autonomy now appeared to be not an attribute of some wealthy or talented men, but as a trait of masculinity itself."³⁴² In other words, the citizen as masculine only existed as such based on the values that the State imposed on the men as a condition of citizenship. The construction of masculinity occurred outside of the citizen, not from within. Even before the period of Napoleon I's rule, to which Surkis refers, there was a shift in the connection between male sexuality and masculinity. Leo Braudy writes that in Europe, "the real change in the discussion of male sexuality in the seventeenth century was thus that biological maleness, especially male sexuality, instead

³⁴² Surkis 2

of being merely assumed, becomes a more discussable aspect of social identity, and therefore more open to debate.³⁴³ The thinking during this period, according to Braudy, “made it more possible and even more acceptable for a man to invest at least something of his emotional life in a relationship with a woman.”³⁴⁴ A man could now have that type of sexual/emotional relationship, and still have a masculine image.³⁴⁵ Masculinity, which in this case encompasses heterosexuality, becomes entirely public by the time of Napoleon.

Michel Foucault offers an analysis of sexuality in “le contexte théorique et pratique auquel elle [la sexualité] est associée.”³⁴⁶ To reiterate from Chapter one, he understands the term “sexuality” through “les mécanismes biologiques de la reproduction [et] les variantes individuelles ou sociales du comportement,” as well as historically, through the “ensemble de règles et de normes, en partie traditionnelles, en partie nouvelles, qui prennent appui sur des institutions religieuses, judiciaires, pédagogiques, médicales.”³⁴⁷ He also acknowledges, however, in a way that these rules and regulations of the State do not, the internal component of sexuality found in behaviors, duties, pleasures, feelings, dreams, and so forth.³⁴⁸ The State thus brings total sexual and

³⁴³ Braudy 205.

³⁴⁴ Braudy 205

³⁴⁵ Interestingly, this cultural expectation shifts again in Germany, according to Klaus Theweleit’s *Male Fantasies*, when the Freikorps are a dominant force during the interwar period of Germany. For these pseudo-soldiers, having a relationship with a woman was a distraction to his real duty to his country. Women’s sexuality was a threat to men’s focus, and “male self-esteem is dependent on the status of Germany, not on his actual relationship with a woman” (Theweleit 32-3). Thus the relationship between male sexuality and women changes with the times, demonstrating the fluidity of masculinity and its relationship to sexuality.

³⁴⁶ Foucault, *Histoire 2* 9

³⁴⁷ Foucault, *Histoire 2* 9-10

³⁴⁸ Foucault, *Histoire 2* 10. For the full quotation from Foucault regarding the internal and external components of sexuality, see Chapter one.

gendered identity into the public eye. Butler interprets Foucault's analysis of power in terms of gender and the identity of the subject. She writes that "Foucault points out that juridical systems of power produce the subject they subsequently come to represent."³⁴⁹ Furthermore, the "subjects regulated by such structures are, by virtue of being subjected to them, formed, defined, and reproduced in accordance with the requirements of those structures."³⁵⁰ The public component of the subject's sexuality takes over the internal component. Thus Foucault's argument explains the manner in which the State as a system of power is able to regulate in broad terms the very personal actions of one's gendered behavior.

Foucault's writings on the male ethic shed light on the mechanisms that determine hierarchies. The one largely consistent piece of this male ethic is the masculine association with activity and dominance rather than passivity and subordination (normally associated with femininity). It is through the opposition of activity and passivity that Foucault understands this ethic.³⁵¹ He explains pleasure through hierarchies, as both are an

analogie dans la structure agonistique, dans les oppositions et différenciations, dans les valeurs affectées aux rôles respectifs des partenaires. Et à partir de là, on peut comprendre qu'il y a dans le comportement sexuel un rôle qui est intrinsèquement honorable, et qui est

³⁴⁹ Butler, *Gender Trouble* 2-3

³⁵⁰ Butler, *Gender Trouble* 2-3

³⁵¹ Foucault, *Histoire* 2 29, 55-6

valorisé de plein droit: c'est celui qui consiste à être actif, à dominer, à pénétrer et à exercer ainsi sa supériorité.³⁵²

Foucault here suggests that society valorizes an individual taking on a sexuality that involves that active behavior. To be sure, aggressive heterosexuality has ties to a hegemonic form of masculinity, while passive heterosexuality has ties to non-dominant masculinities and to femininities. For Foucault, the sex/gender of the recipient of the aggression is not relevant. Within the model of required heterosexuality for martial masculinity, the recipient must be female. The martially masculine male then must enact aggression on two fronts—sexual aggression towards women and non-sexual aggression towards other men.

Men must direct sexual aggressiveness towards women, while they must direct non-sexual aggressiveness towards men, either in actual battle, or in proxy battle, like sports. Foucault does not automatically assign the active role to biological males and the passive role to biological females. For him, power and domination, symbolized by penetration, can occur upon any sex, and not simply upon the female. Foucault uses sexual behavior to outline how systems of power and domination work within the binary of activity/passivity. His use of the words “honorable” and “valorisé” are most interesting when considering hierarchies and the military. Hierarchies place soldiers’ identities within these terms, as these qualities are important for that role. Foucault writes that these qualities are intrinsically and unquestionably revered precisely because of their propensity towards activity (penetration) rather than passivity (being penetrated).

³⁵² Foucault, *Histoire 2* 237

To continue with Foucault's ideas on activity and penetration within this context of war, we can relate sex to war making, where the soldier penetrates the enemy with a weapon, asserting his dominance and thereby his masculinity while feminizing the enemy, who is penetrated by the weapon. Thus, activity and passivity, as well as subordination and domination, contribute to the determination of masculine hierarchies both in and out of the military.

Foucault bases his analysis of power and domination within the strict structure of institutional hierarchies, such as schools, prisons, and most relevant for my purpose, the military. Within the military structure, the one who dominates physically has the most power.³⁵³ Yet within the novels I examine in this chapter, the characters do not maintain this male ethic either on an individual level or within their small communities of soldiers. Thus for my analysis, Foucault's interpretation of the male ethic is to demonstrate the historical, institutional position, which these characters in fiction generally ignore, willfully or circumstantially. These novels, through their tone and language, refuse Foucault's view of the military as creating "*les corps dociles*" which can be manipulated to the will of the State.³⁵⁴ According to Foucault,

la discipline fabrique ainsi des corps soumis et exercés, des corps
 'dociles'. La discipline majore les forces du corps (en termes
 économiques d'utilité) et diminue ces mêmes forces (en termes politiques

³⁵³ It is, of course, important to note that power for Foucault is not always bad. He writes on the positive points of power: "Il faut cesser de toujours décrier les effets de pouvoir en termes négatifs: il 'exclut', il 'réprime', il 'refoule', il 'censure', il 'abstrait', il 'masque', il 'cache'. En fait le pouvoir produit; il produit du réel; il produit des domaines d'objets et des rituels de vérité. L'individu et la connaissance qu'on peut en prendre relèvent de cette production" (Foucault, *Surveiller et Punir* 227).

³⁵⁴ Foucault, *Surveiller et Punir* 161

d'obéissance). D'un mot: elle dissocie le pouvoir du corps; elle en fait d'une part une "aptitude", une "capacité" qu'elle cherche à augmenter; et elle inverse d'autre part l'énergie, la puissance qui pourrait en résulter, et elle en fait un rapport de suggestion stricte.³⁵⁵

Discipline thus creates a tension within the body. In these soldiers and their military existence, we see a reaction that embodies this tension, going beyond Foucault's docile bodies into his "art of voluntary inservitude" and "reflective indocility."³⁵⁶ To elaborate, Foucault argues that a critical awareness emerges:

Et si la gouvernementalisation, c'est bien ce mouvement par lequel il s'agissait dans la réalité même d'une pratique sociale d'assujettir les individus par des mécanismes de pouvoir qui se réclament d'une vérité, eh bien! je dirai que la critique, c'est le mouvement par lequel le sujet se donne le droit d'interroger la vérité sur ses effets de pouvoir et le pouvoir sur ses discours de vérité; et bien! la critique, cela sera l'art de l'inservitude volontaire, celui de l'indocilité réfléchie.³⁵⁷

These soldiers question, though not necessarily outwardly, the power structure of the military based on their desire to live. They see their situation, and in spite of the intensity of the military and of war, they gain the capacity to analyze their circumstances. In this criticism, they recognize the disservice that the military hierarchy and its expectations do to them, and often ultimately reject those expectations when this rejection might save

³⁵⁵ Foucault, *Surveiller et Punir* 162

³⁵⁶ Michel Foucault. "Qu'est-ce que la critique?" *Bulletin de la société française de philosophie* 84.3 (1990): 35-63, 39.

³⁵⁷ Foucault, *Critique* 39

their lives. They are less rigid in their existence than they might be were they to accept all direction from the military.

These novels do not take on a strict view of hierarchies, and in fact, tend to foil them through their own interpretation of their situation, thereby rejecting the institutional framework of power and hierarchies. The actions and interactions within the novels show a pushing aside of the military expectation of masculinity, in favor of more personal versions of alternative masculinities. This is not to say that these novels are unaware of these expectations, but rather that the characters never articulate precisely what they understand as the military or the State's expectation of them in terms of gendered behavior. There is no reference to what it means to "be a man" within the specific parameters of the State. Nevertheless, based on these alternative masculinities, they establish a system of values, suggesting that they understand masculine norms as based in hierarchy, but reject the specifics of those norms. Through their interactions, their values reveal the ways in which characters judge others based on gendered behavior, whether they conform to State norms or not. The system of values also reveals non-adherent behavior, which occurs when one character steps out of the rigid male ethic to behave in ways that, while not necessarily negative, are contrary to the martial male ethic of the time. Others take note of this behavior. Foucault's interpretation of the function of hierarchy serves well here. Victor Tadros, law scholar specializing in the philosophy of punishment, writes in his study of Foucault and the law that according to the philosopher, even though hierarchy does not sufficiently describe the enactment of power, "hierarchy

is a way of understanding power,³⁵⁸ as well as a way of understanding the elements that go into power. In the military context, as in other situations, masculinity is a significant factor in understanding power. Power and masculinity have ties, both through the hegemonic, powerful masculinities, and in the alternative masculinities which outwardly have less power, but which my corpus of novels and films reveals may have more of an ability to last because, in the dangerous circumstances in the trenches, less power means less risk.³⁵⁹

In any consideration of the two topics of war and masculinities, hierarchies certainly deserve significant attention. Both war and gender rely heavily on the imposition of hierarchies and on the control that they provide. Hierarchies are, at their very core, a system of classification. In war, the military classifies individuals by rank, and it participates unofficially in classifying them by their ability to perform within that rank. Masculinity and its system of classification relate to military expectations, according to Mosse, as “during its relatively short life—from the second half of the eighteenth century onwards—the manly ideal changed very little, projecting much the same so-called manly virtues, such as will power, honor, and courage.”³⁶⁰ All of these descriptors cross-represent the required characteristics of a “man,” in the ultimate, most dominating sense of the word, as well as what it means to be a good soldier. In their culturally and politically desired form, masculinity and martiality are one and the same.

³⁵⁸ Victor Tadros. "Between Governance and Discipline: The Law and Michel Foucault." *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies* 18.1 (1998): 75-103, 86.

³⁵⁹ The reduced risk to those in positions of “alternative masculinities” does not refer to the official military hierarchy where those in power face fewer physical risks, but within the hierarchies on the ground, where the powerful leader/hero puts himself in more danger, thereby proving his masculinity.

³⁶⁰ Mosse, *Image* 3-4

What I have just described fits in with an official political and cultural version of war and masculinity. Yet within small pockets, outside of the official stance and rhetoric, alternate versions of masculinities and hierarchies emerge. This chapter focuses on these issues in literary depictions of the trenches, a domain where men face violence and the likelihood of death almost constantly. The literature depicting this violent situation demonstrates that what dictates hierarchies within the broader culture does not necessarily benefit men on the ground, in their small units. Alternate hierarchies are similar to alternate masculinities in that traits and behaviors outside of the ferocious warrior win over. The characters I examine in this chapter judge one another not necessarily on the basis of their warrior abilities, but rather on a more social scale of group interactions, which requires surprisingly different qualities than only “will power, honor and courage.”³⁶¹

Within this discussion of hierarchy, race arises as a critical issue. The position of the African soldier in the French army during this time is quite complex, especially when considering hierarchy, as race functions within the social system as hierarchical. This is to say that race, as a biological marker, has no meaning, yet socially, individuals and societies use race as a means of classification, undermining individuals who are not part of the mainstream racial group. These men have worth in their lack of value to the French. The military positions them on the front lines, making them important assets. Yet the military only puts them in this role in war because French society undervalues them. This contradiction is provocative when considering their depiction in Barbusse’s

³⁶¹ Mosse, *Image 4*

novel, where the narrator describes feelings of awe for their ferociousness, with no recognition of their lack of choice due to their position within the socio-political hierarchy of the era.

This chapter explores the varying hierarchies that exist in the trenches in literature and film, specifically in Stanley Kubrick's *Paths of Glory* (1957), Blaise Cendrars' *La main coupée* (1949), and Henri Barbusse's *Le feu* (1916). These novels and this film offer insight into the ways in which varied masculinities influence alternate forms of hierarchy.

Stanley Kubrick's *Paths of Glory*

According to media and film scholar Jason Sperb, Stanley Kubrick's *Paths of Glory* is one of many films by this director that shows his preoccupation with war as “the most dramatic, visceral, and certainly violent form of historical, cultural, and social engagement.”³⁶² While this dissertation focuses on French and Francophone literature and film, I felt that this American depiction of the French at war deserved a place in my analysis, as it offers a fruitful and complex examination of hierarchy and masculinity. Additionally, Sperb notes, *Paths of Glory* serves “to critique French military institutions during World War I,”³⁶³ further justifying its inclusion. Kubrick directs the audience towards a specific interpretation of the historical events that took place during this war

³⁶² Jason Sperb. *The Kubrick Facade: Faces and Voices in the Films of Stanley Kubrick*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2006, 64.

³⁶³ Sperb 64

with the introductory voice-over, pointing the viewer towards the violence that has already occurred in the war up to the moment when the film begins.³⁶⁴

The film highlights a group of soldiers who suffer the consequences of abuse by the military hierarchy and the power it grants. This film on World War I shows “what’s expected of men once they become soldiers.”³⁶⁵ As literary scholar and Kubrick enthusiast Richard Rambuss notes, “the court-martial plot gives scope to what I take to be the movie’s chief interest: the hierarchies, protocols, rites, and bonds of the military as an all-male society, one in which we find a variety of masculinities.”³⁶⁶ To be sure, as the film progresses, it does show the variety among the men portrayed, yet the three main soldiers accused and tried for cowardice, the driving point of the film, does not display behavior so opposed to martial masculinity. These characters, soldiers of the trenches, are in fact quite heroic when duty calls, throwing themselves into battle as much as they can, but not fulfilling the image of the hero that the higher ranked military officer desires. Because it is a film, the viewer is able to see the men’s actions, and not just trust what the narrator writes.³⁶⁷ Yet the characters do not make a pretense of reckless martial masculinity, which would have sent them to certain death and martyrdom. Because of this refusal, a character in a high position of power, Brigadier General Paul Mireau, accuses them of cowardice. They are tried and found guilty of this charge, after which they are killed before a firing squad.

³⁶⁴ Sperb 47

³⁶⁵ Richard Rambuss. "After Male Sex." *South Atlantic Quarterly* 106.3 (2007): 577-588, 580.

³⁶⁶ Rambuss 580

³⁶⁷ This film is, in fact, an accurate depiction of military operations according to war scholars Edward Longacre and Theodore Zeman in their work on military history (Edward G. Longacre and Theodore J. Zeman. "Foreword." Longacre, Edward G. and Theodore J. Zeman. *Beyond Combat: Essays in Military History in Honor of Russell F. Weigley*. Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2007. ix-xx, xiii.).

The interactions between the soldiers low in the hierarchy, their commanding officer Colonel Dax (played by Kirk Douglas) in the middle, and Mireau, show them acting out their various roles to reveal how the military hierarchy functions. These roles show the distinction between what martial masculinity means at the top of the command chain versus the bottom, demonstrating that even within one hierarchy, martial masculinity is not a fixed identity but changes with rank. Mireau, the figure with the most authority in the film, must assert his power in a downward fashion. Whereas the men in the trenches need to be martially masculine in part by respecting their commanding officer to the point that they are willing to die for him, Mireau does not have to respect many others to maintain his position of authority. In fact, since he is at the top, not a single scene of the film shows him in a position where he is willing to die for his country.

The only point at which the viewers see him in the trenches is when it is safe to be there, when there is no battle. He goes to meet the men, and while doing so enacts violence on the weakest member, slapping a man who is acting erratically due to shell shock. This scene, with its depiction of shell shock, is very important for understanding the effects of war on the individual. Literary and legal scholar Daniel Lieberfeld, in his work on teaching film, points out that the psychological impact shown in this particular scene of *Paths of Glory* is “often missing from official and academic discourses on war.”³⁶⁸ Film (and literature) thus serves to highlight the emotional stakes of battle that more “fact”-based sources recognize less if at all. Just as the institutional forces that

³⁶⁸ Daniel Lieberfeld. "Teaching about War through Film and Literature." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 40.3 (2007): 571-574, 572.

study war do not recognize the importance of symptoms that this character demonstrates, Mireau, in his position of martial authority, shows no compassion for his soldiers, and expects them to want to die, but in a futile, unwinnable battle rather than in a heroic sense. As we will see, moreover, Mireau represents the bully in his accusation of cowardice. He serves as the figure whose misguided attempts to harness martial masculinity take military ideals to an unproductive end. In pressing charges against the soldiers for not fully charging into a battle that was clearly already lost and in having them shot for this conduct, he reveals that his priority is not to his men or to his country, but to his own position of power. He wants to be seen as a fierce commander for whom personal compassion has no power, and he uses these men as an example to display his desired self-image. He demonstrates his own warped view of institutionalized martial masculinity, where men must die needlessly simply to prove bravery, and therefore masculinity.

Mireau's understanding of masculinity does not allow compassion, even for one's own men. For him, masculinity means going into battle, even when that decision is reckless and only hurts the unit. He does not see any nuance between the war hero knowing he is going to die and accepting that for the good of the nation, and the soldier refusing battle because he knows he will die, but that his death will not benefit the nation. His decision to punish them is unsurprising. Political scientist and war scholar Joshua Goldstein writes, "shame is the glue that holds the man-making process together. Males who fail tests of manhood are publicly shamed, are humiliated, and become a negative example for others [...] The power of shame should not be underestimated [...] Shame

centrally punishes failure in masculine war roles in particular—i.e., succumbing to fear in battle and thus proving oneself a coward.”³⁶⁹ Thus, for Mireau, the death sentence serves less as actual punishment³⁷⁰ and more as an example to other men, based on the notion that they will not want to risk their social position by acting against the wishes of the military authority and subsequently face accusations of cowardice, even if their lives are at stake.

The accused men act logically, along with the other men in their unit, going into battle for as long as they can until they see the futility of doing so. Rather than waste their lives on a probable defeat, they retreat, which allows them to fight the Germans later on, hopefully more effectively with a chance at victory. Though the entire unit retreated, Mireau only tries three for cowardice. When Mireau exerts his authority, the film suggests that there is misplaced aggression in military masculinity and war in general. Mireau is the real coward here. His behavior—picking on a random individual (or in this case, three individuals) who are lower in rank than he—is that of a bully. Not in the trenches, not physically able to show his authority and his heroism in battle, he accuses people of what he himself feels—cowardice. The logic of survival and the logic of war masculinity are opposed, and Mireau’s actions depict the logic of survival, even though it may appear that he demonstrates the logic of war. He needs to accuse these men to deflect attention from his own tactical mistake of sending men into battle knowing they would be conquered. When he loses his position, and the military hierarchy attempts to replace him with Dax, the film shows its rejection of Mireau. As such, Mireau’s action

³⁶⁹ Joshua S. Goldstein. *War and Gender: How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001, 269.

³⁷⁰ For the men put to death themselves, the sentence is a punishment.

and his rejection uphold Dax's character as one that reaches ultimate martial masculinity by contrast.

In the middle of the military power structure, Colonel Dax demonstrates martial masculinity, which embodies choice and a command of the moral high ground. Even though the film introduces itself as anti-war, it does offer and glorify an ultimate form of martial masculinity in Dax's character, as he successfully displays the courage that the men in low ranks of authority possess as well as the compassion that the man at the top lacks. This film articulates a pro-military message, as Dax represents all of the positive masculine behaviors of war.

Within the context of a conflict directed at the enemy, compassion may be an understated trait that is required of martial masculinity. Yet this character reveals how important it is in battle and the way in which it ultimately serves the nation. Where does compassion fit with martial masculinity? While its opposites, cruelty or mercilessness, factor into the requirements of martial masculinity within a framework directed towards the enemy, actions towards your own group are different. Hannah Arendt argues that compassion has frequently been a significant factor in revolutions, based on the refusal to let others suffer.³⁷¹ The prevention of suffering is thus compassion's link to war, an exercise that seems wholly lacking in this quality, since it emphasizes violence. While Arendt focuses on compassion as motivation in revolution, war in general has the potential for similar requirements. In theory, and ideally, nations wage war to save others from suffering, though, ironically, causing suffering. Yet within war, Dax sees the

³⁷¹ Hannah Arendt. *On Revolution*. New York: The Viking Press, 1963, 65.

importance of compassion towards his own men, which serves as an important means to minimize the inevitable suffering.

Thus compassion for one's troops, for the men you are commanding, is crucial for the project of martial masculinity. Mireau's character demonstrates the possible negative outcomes of institutionalized masculinity because he is not able to see where it is necessary for him to embody the traits seemingly in contradiction with martial masculinity, while Dax was able to recognize the importance of these traits. This supposedly anti-war film then does nonetheless depict the ultimate form of martial masculinity that is best for the nation. We see the complexity of this set of behavior requirements from the ways in which Mireau and Dax enact martial masculinity.

What the film demonstrates through the character of Dax, Belkin points out as a similar tension overall in military masculinity. Belkin describes these contradictions found in the expectation of martial masculinity within the modern military, writing that

[t]he military has motivated service members to fight by forcing them to embody traits and identifications that have been framed as binary oppositions--masculine/feminine, strong/weak, dominant/subordinate, victor/victim, civilized/barbaric, clean/dirty, straight/queer, legible/illegible, stoic/emotional--and to deny those embodiments at the same time. As such, the troops have found themselves entrapped in dense webs of double binds that confuse them and sustain a penchant for obedience and conformity. The pursuit of masculine status has produced conformity and obedience not just through the disavowal of the

unmasculine, but via the compelled embrace of the masculine/unmasculine and other oppositions which have been constructed as irreconcilable.³⁷²

The soldier is thus in an impossible position. How can one manage to embody all of these contradictory attributes all at once? A successful martially masculine man will have the ability to create a performance in the Butlerian sense of all of these qualities, yet to be able to exist within these contradictions does not seem possible. Fiction and the hero in film, especially, provide an opportunity to display this type of performance, where the character appears genuinely to embrace all of these contradictions. Dax knows when to take on a particular side of oppositional categories in any given circumstance. He also knows when to rebel against these very oppositions, rejecting the position of those above him. While perhaps Belkin's notion of the contradictions maintaining order and obedience is effective in the military, within the world of film and fiction, the rebellious man, who embodies all proper masculine qualities but goes against order and obedience, is more masculine than the man who conforms.

Dax, while not demonstrating all of the traits that Belkin offers, is able to demonstrate many of these oppositions in his actions, most specifically the traits clean/dirty and stoic/emotional. He is a proper soldier who knows how to get dirty in the trenches, but cleans up in the necessary fashion for the military court appearance, showing his refinement—he is clearly a soldier of elevated rank and not simply a man from the trenches. In fact, in the first scene we see Dax cleaning himself. The most

³⁷² Belkin 4-5

revered form of martial masculinity, for which Dax serves as a model, embodies these contradictions. Dax, compared to Mireau, through these contradictions, fits Foucault's explanation of power. Foucault writes, "celui qui doit diriger les autres, c'est celui-là qui doit être capable d'exercer une autorité parfaite sur lui-même: à la fois parce que, dans sa position et avec le pouvoir qu'il exerce, il lui serait facile de satisfaire tous ses désirs, et donc de s'y abandonner, mais aussi parce que les désordres de sa conduite ont leurs effets sur tous et dans la vie collective de la cité."³⁷³ Thus, paradoxically, a powerful individual must be in control at all times, otherwise, power is in jeopardy.

To indulge in one's every whim would mean to relinquish power, because it demonstrates a lack of personal control, and Foucault asserts that it is not possible to maintain control or power over others without doing the same over oneself. While Mireau is unable to control his own power in the sense that he abuses his position with his accusation of cowardice, Dax, embodying the masculine contradictions that Belkin provides, exists within Foucault's theory of power and moderation. Foucault writes that moderation, "entendu comme un des aspects de la souveraineté sur soi est, non moins que la justice, le courage ou la prudence, une vertu qualificatrice de celui qui a à exercer sa maîtrise sur les autres."³⁷⁴ To be sure, extremes, similar to excess, denote a lack of control, hence the importance of Foucault's notion of moderation. Though seemingly impossible to embody, the contradictions Belkin offers act together to create balance and moderation. To take from Dax's dirty/clean contradiction, he finds balance in being able to embody both at appropriate times. He is able to act and react through these

³⁷³ Foucault, *Histoire* 2 94

³⁷⁴ Foucault, *Histoire* 2 94

contradictions only because he ultimately rejects a main principle of the military—that of “obedience and conformity”—against which he knows to rebel. Once it is clear that Mireau will lose his post, his superior, General George Broulard, offers Dax Mireau’s job, and not wanting to succumb to the abuse of authority of the military, Dax rejects this offer. He loves his men, but has a fervent dislike of corrupt authority figures, refusing to follow their lead unquestioningly.

While the film portrays Mireau’s enactment of martial masculinity as a way to prove himself as a man, Dax’s is portrayed as authentic and without pretense. Mireau’s actions, in that they rigidly abide by the martially masculine characteristics required of a man in his position, are more in line with the Butlerian notion of performance, while Dax is seen as the ultimate man because his masculinity is genuine, as evidenced by his ability to see the fine lines of masculinity and balance its contradictions. This behavior confirms gender performativity when considering that Dax is a character who is invented by writers and quite literally performed by the actor Kirk Douglas. The character, in his ability to embody integrity, bravery, *and* compassion, is simply the perfect man, thus it is clear that he serves as a foil to Mireau’s imperfect and obviously performative version of masculinity. In the end, they are both performing masculinity, but with different goals. Through his insistence on his own identification with a certain interpretation of martial masculinity, Mireau attempts to gain power, though he fails. Conversely, Dax risks everything, in a maverick-like move that only serves to elevate his status, though without him overtly intending to do so. Ultimately, he rejects that power, a surprising but clear

sign of his “natural” masculinity, which is starkly contrasted to Mireau’s more desperate, forced, and falsely authoritative masculinity.

Mireau, who is the primary and most frequently on-screen representation of the military institution, clearly sees the ruthless exercise of power as the proper way for a figure of authority to behave in the military, thereby confirming the emphasis the military places on ruthless aggression. Conversely, Dax is unable to ignore the suffering of others because of his ability to be compassionate, understanding, and kind. The physical pose that Kirk Douglas takes on as an actor in this film frames his character as the ultimate war hero, but with an interesting modern twist. The stance that the character Dax takes on in the movie poster is from a scene where he leads his troops into battle.³⁷⁵ He extends one arm upward to signal dominance and readiness to fight, while the other arm holds a gun. His facial expression is ferocious, with his teeth exposed. He appears unaffected by the blood spurting out from behind him. Dax must lead his men into battle with the threat of guns and bombs raining down on him at an unprecedented rate due to new developments in weaponry. His stooped stance, instead of showing him upright and thus coded as brave, demonstrates the need for protection, pointing out a tension within military masculinity—the bravery to move forward towards bullets while maintaining a physical stance to limit the damage to your body. This stance shows the viewer that he is not interested in performing his masculinity for the sake of others, especially not for those in higher positions of authority.

³⁷⁵ See appendix E for an image of the movie poster.

Though not necessarily productive in any real military setting, Dax's ability to refuse authority at the end of the film by rejecting his promotion, all while embodying every other martially masculine trait, provides the American audience with exactly the type of hero it loves—one with a touch of rebellion. This character is the epitome of the iconic movie/war hero, embodying all the proper qualities, even though this film is believed to be anti-war. While Dax rejects a promotion, he does not reject his role as a soldier; in fact, he keeps it by not taking the promotion. This embodiment of martial masculinity demonstrates the pervasiveness of this version of masculinity. War may be bad, but to show that it is bad, there needs to be a masculine man who is capable of fighting in a war. Dax does fight in a war while demonstrating these martially masculine qualities, suggesting that war is negative and should not occur. This character, while superficially rejecting what the military hierarchy stands for, only serves to emphasize the power and social capital of martial masculinity. This film does not engage with the question of the value of martial masculinity, and it especially does not question its value outside of war. Dax embodies this contradiction of rejecting war in theory by rejecting the hierarchy while still enacting the qualities that contribute to a militarized society and to that very hierarchy. This film offers pro-military sentiments through this hyper-masculine character that is so well able to embody all the necessary tensions and contradictions of military masculinity.

In creating a character who embodies perfectly the man who can do everything—not only is he a brilliant commander who has the opportunity to climb the military ranks, but he is also a successful lawyer—the film maintains a positive view of militarization

and of the proper enactment of martial masculinity. This position is not necessarily a positive view of the hierarchical nature of the military, which opens the door to Mireau's distortions and excesses. Dax's contrast to Mireau provides hope of a "good military," if only all the men are able to fulfill the impossible contradictions of martial masculinity, rather than lash out as a bully. Dax balances his masculinity with his ability to embody its contradictory requirements, glorifying the honorable soldier and offering a space for a military with integrity, rather than an abandonment of militarization all together. This rhetoric serves to reinforce the importance of a strong military and the prioritization of military culture, just as Colonel Dax provides a positive vision of militarization in contrast to Mireau's version.

Through the wide-ranging conflict between individuals at various levels of the military, this film demonstrates the hierarchical conflict within the military. The men from the lowest level of the military, the soldiers, enter into conflict with Mireau, a man in a position of high authority. This conflict leads to additional conflict between Mireau and Dax, whose position places him in the middle of the hierarchy between the soldiers and the higher officials like Mireau. The structural military hierarchy also shows the viewer that betrayal can come from fellow soldiers who are taking care of their own self-interest in service of the hierarchy. In his attempt to use his power, Mireau shows himself to be unfit for that power. Mireau is perfectly willing to kill his own men to prove himself as a general, an action that demonstrates just how dangerous a certain kind of behavior during war can be for all those involved, but especially for those on the low end of the military hierarchy, who lack authority and agency.

Overall, this film shows the results of the uses and abuses of hierarchies and the positive outcome of perfectly balanced martial masculinity. It shows an instance where abuse of hierarchy leads to a loss for everyone, except the character who maintains balance between the tensions of masculinity and power, thereby arguing that a top-down version of power is detrimental, but a balanced version, embodied in Dax, is honorable. Through Dax's elevation, the film maintains a glorification of martial masculinity, as long as one does not use martial masculinity to obtain hierarchical power. Maintaining martial masculinity without using it to engage with hierarchical structures of power—and gaining power—goes against the purpose of martial masculinity, thereby fully idealizing the character of Dax as having power, but not abusing it or being corrupted by it. Finally, just as Zola argues in his open letter, we see in this film that because of the hierarchy, fairness and discipline are incompatible. The three soldiers put before the firing squad are executed not because they deserve it, but to maintain Mireau's position in the hierarchy by demonstrating his ability to discipline his men.

Blaise Cendrars' *La main coupée*

While a version of this “perfect” character that embodies martial masculinity but rejects the benefits of hierarchical power does not exist in Cendrars' *La main coupée*, the theme of compassion does play a role in parts of the narrative. The form of compassionate masculinity in *Paths of Glory* shifts slightly in Cendrars' novel, where the narrator demonstrates true compassion for an enemy soldier, thereby depicting war without an all-encompassing attitude of militarization. It is important to note that all of

the characters in the unit portrayed in Cendrars' text are in the French Foreign Legion, and therefore represent a multitude of nationalities, none of which is French. Their tasks as soldiers are the same, to be sure, yet their position vis-à-vis France alters their notion of patriotism. By enlisting in the Foreign Legion, they gain French citizenship,³⁷⁶ yet because of their position fighting for a foreign nation, they may already be predisposed to compassion towards those different from themselves. While published as fiction rather than an autobiography, the similarities between "Blaise," the narrator, and Blaise Cendrars, the author, are too close simply to accept a complete distance between the two. French war literature scholar Laurent Drapier writes that this novel "se présente comme un fragment d'autobiographie [...] [insisting] sur ce fait, dans l'ordre de l'autobiographie — et même si celle-ci participe à bien des égards de l'esthétique romanesque—, ces portraits sont revendiqués comme référentiels."³⁷⁷ The fact that both the author and the narrator fought for the French Foreign Legion and lost their right arms, a reference to the title of the book, invites one to question any clear separation between fiction and memoir.

These characters in the novel demonstrate acts of compassion in a scene where the narrator (the head of the unit in a low position of authority) and one of his fellow soldiers, Ségouâna, originally from the Moravian part of what is now the Czech Republic,

³⁷⁶ This policy of gaining citizenship by fighting for the French Army reinforces the expectation by the French state of a masculine citizenship. These men are proving both their masculinity and their allegiance to France by fighting, thereby gaining legal citizenship status within the nation.

³⁷⁷ Laurent Drapier. "Blaise Cendrars et le procès du silence." *Altérations, créations dans la langue: les langages dépravés*. Ed. Anne Tomiche. Clermont-Ferrand: Presses Universitaires Blaise Pascal, 2001. 327-336, 328.

are on guard.³⁷⁸ Ségouâna shoots a German soldier. Unsure if he is dead or alive, the subsequent conversation between Ségouâna and the narrator suggests that kindness and sympathy—potentially stereotypes of feminine virtues and, at the very least, behaviors and sentiments that are contradictory to martially masculine ruthlessness—are important to these two men. Ségouâna expresses his discomfort with the situation, “C’est la première fois que je tire un homme de sang-froid. Je l’ai visé dans l’aîne...”³⁷⁹ This is an admission, and within this admission, there is clearly fear. Ségouâna expresses a fear of shooting, indicating that this moment is significant—it is his first time having shot at a person, a life-altering action. In his fear, and perhaps his compassion, Ségouâna’s aim is inaccurate—he does not shoot the enemy in a major organ for a guaranteed kill, but rather in his genitals.

Much later, the narrator himself confirms Ségouâna’s feelings on the situation, “Je le sentais devenir nerveux. Cette trop longue attente et aussi le fait qu’il venait de tirer son premier homme.”³⁸⁰ In spite of Ségouâna’s, which likely contradicts the way a masculine soldier should feel, there is nothing that gives the impression of unmanliness about his actions or his speech here, nor is there any critique coming from the narrator.³⁸¹

³⁷⁸ I would like to return briefly to the fact that the African soldiers are not fully allowed into the collective world of the French military, though they define themselves as *camarade*, to point out that Ségouâna, an Eastern European soldier, is allowed in this group and gains access to full citizenship by fighting in the French Foreign Legion. The African soldiers fight as well, but as colonial tropes, are not allowed citizenship. When describing the African soldiers in Roger’s text, the nurse stops short of extending the African soldiers participation to the entire French army, restricting it to smaller units. See Chapter 2 for further analysis.

³⁷⁹ Cendrars 45

³⁸⁰ Cendrars 49

³⁸¹ Cendrars’ narrator is not one to hold back on critiques of masculinity. In several of his descriptions of his fellow soldiers, which I analyze in this chapter, he comments on the various aspects of each, which make them more or less masculine, and connects these qualities or lack thereof to the individual’s ability to be a good soldier. While the

In fact, this situation is in part a confirmation of masculinity, emphasized by the location of his shot in his enemy's groin. He aimed at the enemy in the physical marker of his manhood, marking himself as masculine in comparison, demonstrating the way in which masculinity is relational in nature. The chance of this aim being accidental is unlikely, as the narrator refers to Ségouâna as "le meilleur fusil de la compagnie pour avoir pratiqué le tir au pigeon."³⁸² By penetrating the German in the place that he himself theoretically uses to penetrate others, Ségouâna's action suggests an extreme form of sexual dominance. In the act of war, Ségouâna penetrates the male sex organ—the organ that cannot, sexually speaking, be penetrated. To be sure, there is no indication that this act of penetration relates to Ségouâna's sexuality, but it exerts power over the German soldier's sexual expression, which is an additional way of dominating him. Yet, rather than feeling dominance over another, Ségouâna feels anxiety.

This feeling of anxiety that he expresses over having shot someone for the first time demonstrates his compassion within the framework of war. Here, Ségouâna is not interested in dominance, sexual or otherwise. In fact, these characters do not discuss the notion of dominance in this part of the narrative at all. Ségouâna and the narrator's compassion is different in that it does not lead to more violence, but rather is an attempt to correct a past violence. In this instance, there was a violent encounter that led to compassion, which temporarily suspends the cycle of violence.

narrator does not explicitly question the notion of the "good soldier," he does so through his own judgment of the qualities of a "good soldier." Rather than impose martially masculine standards on men to earn his approval as soldiers, he judges them based on a different set of criteria related to their spirit of community.

³⁸² Cendrars 40

To be sure, there is an element of Arendt's theory on compassion present in the actions of Ségouâna and the narrator. To examine their actions, I turn to her interpretation of the relationship between compassion and pity. She writes,

Compassion, in other words, was discovered and understood as an emotion or a sentiment, and the sentiment which corresponds to the passion of compassion is, of course, pity. Pity may be the perversion of compassion, but its alternative is solidarity. It is out of pity that men are 'attracted toward *les hommes faibles*,' but it is out of solidarity that they establish deliberately and, as it were, dispassionately a community of interest with the oppressed and exploited.³⁸³

The interaction between Ségouâna, the narrator, and the injured German certainly demonstrates solidarity with the enemy, a form of compassion that is not productive in the military. If Ségouâna and the narrator were not similarly in a situation of risk, their actions might fit more with pity. However, given the vulnerability they have in common with the German, their actions most certainly correspond with compassion, and compassion on a strictly individual level rather than in a collective, revolutionary- and violence-inspiring way. Compassion here is in opposition to Arendt's notion of a "community of interest," as it represents a strictly individual mode of solidarity, rather than a communal one. This version of compassion prevents violence and death, rather than causing it.

³⁸³ Arendt 83-4. Author's emphasis

Martial masculinity values ruthlessness and ferocity over compassion as it feeds on violence, yet military institutions ask the soldiers to enact, as we saw in Colonel Dax, these contradictory values. The requirement to embody these contradictions is confusing, as the men must also define themselves in opposition to femininity, since, according to the 19th-Century French and gender studies scholar Margaret Waller, “the two sexes derive their meaning not from any intrinsic properties but from the ways that they are mutually defined.”³⁸⁴ Yet, Ségouâna’s reaction offers suggestions as to what it should mean to be a man during war—the narrator suggests the good soldier, or man, should have sympathy towards the enemy, in spite of this contradiction.

The narrator echoes this sympathy when he interacts later with the German soldier, who does not die from the wound inflicted by Ségouâna. After describing the wound of the enemy soldier as “pas belle,” the narrator says to the man, “Ne t’en fais pas, pauvre vieux, ça n’est rien. On sera bientôt rendus et tu fileras à l’hôpital, veinard. Je ne te fais pas mal, non? Comment t’appelles-tu?”³⁸⁵ He expresses concern for his wounded enemy. He is nurturing, taking care of him, making him feel better about a very bad situation—almost motherly, which is generally a stereotype of feminine behavior. The two men have a friendly conversation, learning about each other, and engaging with each other in a way that does not suggest they are supposed to be enemies. The German does not seem the least bit surprised or disturbed by or suspicious of the narrator’s willingness to help him, making their interaction come across as completely natural and even

³⁸⁴ Margaret Waller. *The Male Malady: Fictions of Impotence in the French Romantic Novel*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1993, 4.

³⁸⁵ Cendrars 56-7

predictable for both parties. The narrator did the only thing he could—he helped a fellow human being.

This concern for the other, as Connell puts it, is, according to “modern usage of the term,” unmasculine. Connell offers a reflection on the ways in which masculinity is organized in society, where there is an assumption “that one’s behavior results from the type of person one is.”³⁸⁶ He goes on to define masculinity through its negation: “an unmasculine person would behave differently [from the masculine person]: being peaceable rather than violent, conciliatory rather than dominating [...]”³⁸⁷ However, compassion serves as a means of self-preservation. As soldiers on the low end of the hierarchy, Ségouâna and the narrator must take care to demonstrate masculinity and military prowess—shooting a German soldier—while preserving their own safety. Compassion aids this self-preservation, physically and also emotionally, as it shows these soldiers that they have the capacity to act humanely in war. To be sure, their compassion demonstrates no evidence of being solely self-serving. Yet it does serve to send the message to German soldiers that they are fighting war in a compassionate way—while Ségouâna did shoot the soldier, the men do not just leave the German to die. Perhaps their actions serve as a signal of expectation or hope that they would receive the same treatment in return if the roles were reversed.

Nationalities and loyalties become less important, as either could be the wounded soldier at the mercy of the enemy. The act of compassion can come across as either masculine (honorable) or feminine (nurturing). Cendrars’ writing makes clear that the

³⁸⁶ Connell, *Masculinities* 67

³⁸⁷ Connell, *Masculinities* 67

norms of masculinity imposed on a person do not necessarily reflect that person's full identity. Rather, he can exist with gendered identities that do not subscribe to social norms, thereby subverting them. Yet when this subversion of masculinity occurs, the result does not match with either gender, but rather reveals a distinct individual, influenced by gender roles to be sure, but flexible within them. Anne Mounic writes in her study of *La main coupée* that the entire novel, in fact, echoes a "voix singulière, se défiant de l'institution militaire et de toute institution d'ailleurs [...]." ³⁸⁸ In refusing to enact martial masculinity as defined by the coercive State, Cendrars' narrator rejects not only the military institution but also the cultural values that it imposes on its citizens.

Additionally, these characters, in simultaneously rejecting the demands of masculinity and of war, as well as the rhetoric surrounding combat, show how war, as well as masculinity, is a social and cultural construction. ³⁸⁹ Just as society constructs masculinity, it constructs war as well: killing is not a natural human instinct, ³⁹⁰ and in fact, the average healthy person will resist killing another human if at all possible. ³⁹¹ Our building of the institutions of war and masculinity and the activities required to participate in them are thus both artificial and constructed.

It is possible that the situation of war, and specifically of battle, creates *more* allowances for men to be caring, but only behind the scenes, and mainly within the lower ranks of the military hierarchy. The life or death conditions of war are such that men still appear masculine in these moments of care, precisely because they occur in war, typically

³⁸⁸ Mounic 7

³⁸⁹ Connell, *War* 5

³⁹⁰ Connell, *War* 5

³⁹¹ Grossman 29

a culturally masculine endeavor.³⁹² Specific to the French military case, the wars leading up to World War I developed a sense of military fraternity that led to increased care among the soldiers. Brian Joseph Martin, a French literary scholar with an emphasis on military history and gender, writes of the impact of military fraternity, beginning with “the [French] Revolution’s invocation of fraternity as the inaugural theme and central principle of republican military service.”³⁹³ This theme of fraternity “fostered an unprecedented sense of camaraderie among soldiers in the armies of Napoleon. For many, the hardships of combat led to intimate friendships based on mutual comfort and support.”³⁹⁴ Martin bases his argument on the military theory of Charles Ardant du Picq, a French military officer and military theorist writing during the 18th-Century. Ardant du Picq believed the following:

afin que de l’habitude de vivre ensemble, d’obéir aux mêmes chefs, de commander aux mêmes hommes, de partager fatigues et délassements, de concourir entre gens qui s’entendent vite à l’exécution des mouvements et des évolutions guerrières, naissent la confraternité, l’union, le sens du métier, le sentiment palpable, en un mot, et l’intelligence de la solidarité.³⁹⁵

³⁹² Connell, *War* 4

³⁹³ Brian Joseph Martin. *Napoleonic Friendships: Military Fraternity, Intimacy, and Sexuality in Nineteenth Century France*. Lebanon, N.H.: University Press of New England, 2011, 11.

³⁹⁴ Martin 11

³⁹⁵ Charles Jean Ardant du Picq. *Études sur le combat: combat antique et combat moderne*. Paris: Editions Champ Libre, 1978, 53.

In other words, these soldiers, in the midst of the components of war outside of fighting, see their situation as communal, rather than individual.³⁹⁶ The conditions of war generate an intimacy among the soldiers, leading to moments of care between them.³⁹⁷

Thus, the idea of watching out for your fellow soldier is especially important in such a high-stakes environment as trench warfare, where there is clearly a need for some other kind of masculinity to emerge that redeems the men from the atrocities the war requires that they commit as individuals because of the communal goal of killing. Men must at once be ruthless and must live within the rules of brotherhood. No doubt, there are texts that reveal extreme ruthlessness towards the enemy, but these moments of compassion do well to demonstrate the contradictory values of military masculinity.

Historical accounts of battle replicate the narrator's refusal in *La main coupée* to focus on the killing of others, demonstrating that compassion for the enemy can save one's own life. In a video interview on *Bat of Minerva* with Peter Shea, Adam Zientek, a 20th-Century war historian, says that soldiers during World War I would often have an "arrangement" with the enemy, where both sides would take turns shooting at a specific spot where they knew the enemy would not be. This way, they used up the shell casings for when the superiors came by to make sure they were shooting enough rounds, all the while ensuring mutual safety.³⁹⁸ They were shooting, but not *at* anyone. These soldiers

³⁹⁶ In Chapter one, I elaborate on the tensions between the individual and the community in the trenches, found in Barbusse's *Le feu*.

³⁹⁷ This sense of fraternity is not unique to the French war experience or to literature coming out of French wars. Soldier-authors of more recent American wars represent it in literature as well, specifically in O'Brien's *The Things They Carried* and in Mark Owen's *No Easy Day* on the raid that killed Osama bin Laden.

³⁹⁸ Adam Zientek. *Drinking in the Trenches* Peter Shea. Institute for Advanced Study, University of Minnesota, 9 December 2011. <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GuoF61PnILI>>. A well-known example similar to what Zientek describes is the Christmas Eve truce of 1914, short-lived as it was,

decided to make certain of each other's safety (and therefore their own) by tricking those in positions of authority. War in this situation exists only in theory as this practice eliminates momentarily the practical act of killing.

Soldiers in the lower ranks were therefore playing with the hierarchy of the military, demonstrating a kind of power over those with authority. In being able not only to fool the military authorities regarding their actions while preserving their life and demonstrating compassion for the enemy, these soldiers allow the one side of the military's ruthlessness/compassion requirement of martial masculinity to outweigh the other side. Through these moments, both historical and fictional, it becomes evident that a communal form of compassion is necessary for those with little authority in the ranks, as it protects them from some of the dangers of war.

In contrast, Mireau represents the authority of men in higher ranks, which can rest on an attitude with no compassion, as they must push men into danger. It does not seem possible to tell a person to walk in the line of bullets and bombs while having compassion. Dax's character is capable of this compassion, as someone in the mid-ranks who enters battle with his men, but were he to have accepted the position of higher authority offered to him, he would likely lose that ability to lead compassionately as he would be too distant from the battle to relate to the experience. It is through compassion that hierarchy reveals itself as dangerous for low-ranking individuals. Those low-ranking men do feel compassion, as they are faced with the possibility that they and their friends

between French, British, and German soldiers in celebration of the holiday. For a fictionalized version of this true story, see the opera *Silent Night*, which had its world premiere in St. Paul in November 2011 (*Silent Night*. By Kevin Puts and Mark Campbell. Perf. John Robert Lindsey and Liam Bonner. Ordway Center for Performing Arts, St. Paul, MN. 10 November 2011. Live Performance).

might die every day, whereas those at the top do not experience this kind of vulnerability that lends to compassion and have less hesitation in commanding men to kill. They do not conceive of themselves as vulnerable, therefore they cannot see others as such.

Judith Butler points to the importance of recognizing our shared vulnerability, an issue that I examined in the previous chapter. She argues that by refusing to recognize a shared vulnerability one is likely to engage in violence. For her, “mindfulness of this vulnerability can become the basis of claims for non-military political solutions, just as denial of this vulnerability [...] can fuel the instruments of war.”³⁹⁹ By rejecting and even fearing grief and the vulnerability it imposes, violence becomes the only possibility as fear takes over. Ségouâna and the narrator’s reactions and actions suggest that they were aware of their own fragility when considering their enemy and therefore they did not perpetuate the violence. Ségouâna, through his recognition of vulnerability and subsequent actions, interrupts the cycle of violence, even though he is surrounded by it. In the trenches, it could be easier to see violence as the only option to save one’s own life. Ségouâna, followed by the narrator, takes a different approach.

Ségouâna feels guilt for wounding the German and the narrator ensures that this wounded soldier finds adequate care, demonstrating a social connection between enemies. Butler writes, “Loss and vulnerability seem to follow from our being socially constituted bodies, attached to others, at risk of losing those attachments, exposed to others, at risk of violence by virtue of exposure.”⁴⁰⁰ For Butler, then, we are vulnerable mostly due to the connection we have with others. Without social connections outside of

³⁹⁹ Butler, *Precarious Life* 29

⁴⁰⁰ Butler, *Precarious Life* 20

the self, there would be no risk of loss and no notion of loss. There is the potential for the loss of the life of the individual, but that is not where Butler puts her focus. In her assertion that loss and vulnerability result from our sociality, she implies that the community is more important to the individual than is the individual alone—the individual without the community has no value. We can understand Ardant du Picq's theory of combat unity and solidarity from Butler's assertion, though he limits this solidarity to the military unit. The military unit is a group of socially constituted bodies, which cares for its members, and thus takes care to preserve the sense of fraternity within that unit.

The notion of the socially constituted body offers a compelling reason for Ségouâna to feel the guilt he feels, one that extends even outside of the individual military unit. To be sure, Butler's assertions concern a context of real-life conflict, while Ségouâna is a fictional character. Fiction thus offers a narrative through which to understand this larger, abstract concept that Butler lays out. The character's story is one of vulnerability, and while it is not a factual story with a verifiable set of events, it is a way to illustrate Butler's understanding of vulnerability based on sociality. Ségouâna's reaction shows that even in the face of the enemy, these men are able to see human vulnerability and react to it humanely, rather than lash out with more violence. They understand that in spite of the power relationships that lead to war, they must accept their common human vulnerability, as they find themselves in similarly precarious situations. The lines of hierarchy then blur, as the narrator's desire to recognize the German soldier's vulnerability and humanity leads to a loss of authority for those in the higher

military positions. Neither the vulnerability of the German, nor the acknowledgement of his own vulnerability by the narrator, nor Ségouâna's fear create doubt of their masculinity or their fitness as soldiers within the context of this text.

The narrator does not hierarchize any particular character as more masculine than any other because of this interaction, in fact, there is no judgment at all, only an honest acknowledgment of fear. The reader can see these men relating to one another through the acknowledgment of their shared vulnerability. In showing how vulnerability and grief are relational, which I think these characters' actions demonstrate quite well, Butler also ties in the way in which gender and sexuality possess a similar relationality that is inseparable from grief and vulnerability. It is our gender and sexuality that demonstrate our vulnerability, regardless of whether they fit into a normative paradigm or not. Butler famously writes,

We are undone by each other. And if not we're missing something. If this seems so clearly the case with grief, it can be so only because it was already the case with desire. One does not always stay intact. One may want to, or manage to for a while, but despite one's best efforts, one is undone, in the face of the other, by the touch, by the scent, by the feel, by the prospect of the touch, by the memory of the feel. And so, when we speak about 'my sexuality' or 'my gender,' as we do and as we must, we nevertheless mean something complicated that is partially concealed by our usage. As a mode of relation, neither gender nor sexuality is precisely

a possession, but, rather, is a mode of being dispossessed, a way of being *for another or by virtue of another*.⁴⁰¹

Thus sexuality and gender (and perhaps more specifically, masculinity) must be included in discussions of grief. Not through sexuality, but through his alternative version of masculinity, Ségouâna is undone by the German, or rather by the German's reaction to his actions. Through his actions, he links himself to the German and he (as well as the narrator) cannot simply leave him alone. The grief or at least the potential for grief, which is present in Ségouâna's fear and in the narrator's compassion, binds these men together, making them "for another, or by virtue of another." Masculinity's relationality is evident in this scene through the highly gendered scenario of combat, where there is a need, though impossible, to avoid vulnerability. Instead, the men embrace vulnerability, which brings these enemy soldiers together.

Yet when considering sexuality, the actions of these characters do not lend themselves to obvious analysis. Ségouâna's shot penetrated the German in a way that prevents him from future penetration, the ultimate way to dominate with his body. Thus, this soldier's ability to dominate through his sexuality disappears. Yet Ségouâna does not take this domination for himself. Instead, he recognizes his own vulnerability and the two men help the German. As Butler indicates, then, they exist for this other.

This scene between Ségouâna, the narrator, and the German soldier is a rare moment where the enemy enters the space of this novel; in fact, the narrator mainly focuses on the men in his unit and on how he sees them both as soldiers and as men. He

⁴⁰¹ Butler, *Precarious Life* 23-4. Author's emphasis

makes sure to create a distinction between the two identities, judging their ability as men and as soldiers separately. Additionally, he never directly compares the men to one another, yet there is a comparison made in his judgment of them as soldiers. Since there is no examining of the soldiers in contrast to one another, the narrator does promote an underlying idea that he is comparing them to an ideal, as he often remarks on their quality as a soldier, without offering any specific alternate model. One of the men, Rossi, is an Italian of gargantuan proportion, “Rossi mangeait comme quatre. C’était un hercule de foire mais une bonne pâte d’homme, terrible dans ses colères, qui le prenaient comme des rages d’enfants, mais inoffensif car Rossi avait peur de sa force musculaire qui était réellement prodigieuse.”⁴⁰² From this description, there is already a reference to the ideal masculine quality stemming from Greek mythology, as Rossi is compared to Hercules, the ultimate figure of strength and masculine prowess.

Yet the descriptors that follow fill Rossi with contradictions. He is good and nice, characteristics that often code as feminine, and therefore the opposite of masculine.⁴⁰³ He experiences rage, but his is not the controlled rage of a man, rather the uncontrolled rage of a child, positioning him on a lower rung of hierarchical masculinity based on his immature reactions. According to war historian Joy Damousi, an ideal soldier in the context of World War I translates to an ideal man.⁴⁰⁴ The ideal soldier, and therefore the ideal man, is someone who is not only strong, but who is able to channel that strength appropriately, with courage rather than fear to help the nation. Thus in terms of strength,

⁴⁰² Cendrars 23

⁴⁰³ Forth and Taithe 6

⁴⁰⁴ Damousi, Joy. "Socialist Women and Gendered Space: The Anti-Conscription and Anti-War Campaigns of 1914-1918." *Labour History* 60 (1991): 1-15, 9.

Rossi fits the paradigm of a martially masculine man, but subverts the expectation of how a martially masculine man should behave because of his mental reaction to his own physicality.

His body does get him into trouble with the hierarchy. Because of his height, he could not fit in the trenches. Discussing this problem with his colonel sends him to prison for eight days, “[...] *pour s’être adressé directement à son colonel pour affaire de service et sans passer par la voie hiérarchique [...]*.”⁴⁰⁵ Due to his failure to follow the proper military hierarchy, he must suffer specific consequences, which seem to go against the mission of the army in this situation—to have men to fight. While in jail, he is unable to fight—suggesting that the main priority of the army is to command authority rather than to defend the nation, which is a similar message provided in *Paths of Glory* through Mireau.

In spite of the tenuous portrait of Rossi’s masculinity, the narrator does see him as a good soldier, as

il était indispensable dans l’escouade. Il fichait un pieu en terre d’un seul coup de maillet, alors que les autres s’y mettaient à deux et s’y reprenaient à dix reprises... À Frise, c’est en somme Rossi, à lui tout seul, qui avait tendu notre réseau de barbelés et dans un temps record, et le travail était impeccable. Les hommes lui avaient tout pardonné, ses inconséquences,

⁴⁰⁵ Cendrars 24. Author’s emphasis

sa démarche inconsidérée chez le colonel, ses sautes d'humeur, sa
bâfrerie, à cause de ça.⁴⁰⁶

Thus Rossi's emotional reactions, which would prevent him from reaching higher military ranks, are not a factor for the narrator when judging whether this man is a good soldier or not based on the unofficial hierarchy of the trenches. This implicit contradiction reveals that military principles cannot easily sway the soldiers who judge this man positively. This contradiction is particularly evident at one specific moment, where the narrator describes Rossi's state, he "était à genoux devant son créneau et pleurait la tête entre les mains... Par la suite tout cela se calma et Rossi se montra assez bon soldat, quoique se perdant facilement en patrouille."⁴⁰⁷ This scenario demonstrates that the unit can see a soldier exhibiting behavior that is in opposition with martially masculine values, crying, and yet subsequently judge him as a good enough soldier, subverting the notion that being a good soldier is the only way to be a good man. Though he does not fit into any one paradigm, which places him on the edge of military manliness, his unit still appreciates the positive qualities he does have. In the narrator's ability to see the balance of Rossi's traits as a soldier and respecting him in that role in spite of his faults, there is a rejection of the military imposed hierarchy.

The narrator even articulates this contradiction, remarking that although Rossi was strong in terms of muscles, he was nonetheless weak, "comme un éléphant, Rossi était fragile, s'enrhumait pour un rien, était facilement démoralisé [...]."⁴⁰⁸ A large

⁴⁰⁶ Cendrars 26

⁴⁰⁷ Cendrars 24

⁴⁰⁸ Cendrars 27

presence that could be the cause of destruction, balanced with an inner fragility, leads this individual to feel frightened by his own strength. Rossi is not the marker, internally, of martial masculinity. Nevertheless, in praising Rossi's abilities as a soldier, the narrator rejects the imposition of the absolute notion of all-round perfect military prowess.

Thus while Foucault refers to a male ethic that is in place in all cultures, which requires honor through domination, here we see that there are conflicting male ethics. These conflicting ethics lead to rejections of certain codes of behavior imposed by figures of authority and institutions, such as the military, in favor of a male ethic dictating male behavior on a personal and communal level. The dominant male ethic Foucault describes does not serve well here, where the priorities are not focused on that type of power, but rather on a more basic level of survival that does not involve violence in the same way. The descriptions of these men in Cendrars' novel are of generally peaceful men. Thus, their own hierarchy within their community differs from this institutional male ethic of violence. The narrator does not even describe the ladies' man, Lang, in terms of forceful penetration that Foucault suggests in this institutional male ethic. While Foucault argues that this male ethic is a code made for and by men, in reality, when he refers to "men" it is in the larger, institutional sense of the word. It is the institutions, ruled by men in positions of hegemonic masculinity, which determine Foucault's particular type of male ethic. Nevertheless, within these characters, Foucault's notion of critique emerges over the institutional male ethic, and these characters are able to question, critique, and analyze their circumstances. These characters favor varying codes of male behavior depending on their circumstances. There is a discovery of this new ethic in the trenches

that allows for flaws, unlike the ethic that the military authority imposes in *Paths of Glory*, which, through Mireau's rigid interpretation of the code of martial male behavior, ignores the humanity of the men involved in battle. The alternative ethic that produces the alternative hierarchy of the trenches, provides a code of behavior where real survival is the goal, rather than the military male ethic in which national victory is the goal, and individual lives are not necessarily the priority.

There is not only forgiveness of "unmanly" behavior in Cendrars' trenches. Immediately after Rossi's story in the narrative, Lang's experience is recounted. Lang is a character who epitomizes the "dandy" or the *homme galant* of the 18th- and 19th-Centuries. This "feminized" version of masculinity was once popular, but that popularity had passed by the time of World War I. The narrator's characterization of Lang is less forgiving than that of Rossi, placing Lang and his particular version of masculinity lower on the hierarchy. There is judgment here, and even though it is evident in Rossi's description that the narrator rejects the military's insistence on a certain brand of masculinity, some versions of masculinity nevertheless are impossible to maintain in the trenches. Lang's masculinity is of that genre. Through the narrator's description, this masculinity comes across as more feminine than that of the child-like Rossi, which suggests that the narrator understands a boy as more masculine than a woman. The rejection of the feminine is largely what masculinity, specifically with regard to war, is about. In a larger, global context, the most common way I have encountered in my research to define masculinity is that which is *not* feminine.

Lang, in his behavior and appearance, engages in more stereotypically feminine behaviors, in line with that of the dandy. The narrator offers a direct comparison of Lang and Rossi,

c'était le plus bel homme du bataillon. Il était aussi grand et fort que Rossi; mais si l'Italien était gros, épais, lourdaud, noir, chauve, et barbu comme un Calabrais, Lang, qui était Luxembourgeois, était bien proportionné, élancé, svelte, adroit, avait les yeux bleus, la peau blanche, les cheveux blonds et portait une moustache frisée de Gaulois, la plus superbe et fière moustache que j'aie jamais vue.⁴⁰⁹

With the exception of the mustache, Lang's physical description could fit a feminine woman just as well as a man, whereas Rossi's would be a harder fit, stereotypically speaking. Though there is a comparison here, there is not yet any form of hierarchy between Lang and Rossi. As the story continues, though, we see that Lang is not good enough to be in the unit, and when the narrator has a chance to get rid of him, he does so precisely because of Lang's inadequate martial masculinity.

The only way Lang fits into the paradigm of martial masculinity is through his sexuality and his sexual expression. World War I historian Jean-Yves Le Naour points to the importance for men at war of demonstrating sexuality and sexual dominance through stories, citing Cendrars' novel as a key example of this practice.⁴¹⁰ He comments on the single-sex element that factors into the importance of this sex talk, "Il semble néanmoins

⁴⁰⁹ Cendrars 34

⁴¹⁰ Le Naour, Jean-Yves. "Il faut sauver notre pantalon". *La Première Guerre mondiale et le sentiment masculin d'inversion du rapport de domination.* *Cahiers d'histoire. Revue* 84 (2001): 33-44, 6. The page for this reference is from the online access the University of Minnesota Libraries provides, which is why it is different from the page numbers provided in the citation for the article.

que la guerre et l'éloignement prolongé renforcent la violence des communautés viriles."⁴¹¹ Thus, male presence reinforces this type of masculine bonding. The narrator notes Rossi's hesitation in terms of the discussion of sexuality—he is uncomfortable when the unit engages in discussions related to sex, sexual appetites, and sexual adventures.⁴¹² This hesitation in the domain of sexual expression goes against the Napoleonic ideal of male soldiers, therefore lowering Rossi's status. Lang, however, is very open with his heterosexual desire, as it is an important driver of his behavior. As Surkis points out, heterosexuality is critical to masculine identity of the time. However, Lang's sexual prowess combined with his fear of war shows the echoes of tension between men's relationship to women and masculinity. Braudy writes of the way in which the understanding of male sexuality as related to women shifted around the 17th-Century, as,

the ancient tribal imperative that defined a man's honor as composed of both honor in warfare and protection of his family's sexual purity in peace became a prelude to a newly reinforced belief that women were a threat to male control. This confession of frailty was a striking change from earlier assurances that male sexuality was still the human standard, although its composure and integrity might be threatened by [the] female.⁴¹³

⁴¹¹ Le Naour 6

⁴¹² Cendrars 30-1

⁴¹³ Braudy 202

This threat of sexuality, when “men are made imperfect by women,”⁴¹⁴ speaks to Lang’s struggle at war. We can read his obsession with being the seducer as his ultimate downfall as a masculine figure in war—one cannot both love women and be brave, as women are traditionally seen as the downfall of man.⁴¹⁵ His sexual desire drove him to join the military. He saw being a soldier as a way to woo women, which is not surprising given what we have seen regarding sexuality and society from Surkis who writes that “sexuality operates [...] as a powerful site through which individuals could be articulated to the social order, and not simply as a force to be ‘repressed.’”⁴¹⁶ Though it is through sexuality that Lang does what the State desires of him—becoming a soldier—his reasons are clearly inadequate to the role, as he fails as a soldier.

So it is not too far of a stretch to see how while Lang is “un bourreau des cœurs, un homme à femmes [...],”⁴¹⁷ the narrator feminizes him through every other description. With this focus on woman during war, a time when women should not be the focus (or at least should only be a background focus, as men are trying to save them), Lang proves himself to be an ineffective soldier, having only joined the war effort to impress. In fact, the narrator frames the description of his ability to woo women in war-like terms, as there is something in the language used that reveals the manner in which these hearts are broken. He is an executioner of hearts, which, within the context of a war novel, heightens a sense of violence towards another.

⁴¹⁴ Braudy 203

⁴¹⁵ This type of narrative goes as far back as the human origin story in Genesis, with Eve tempting Adam with the apple.

⁴¹⁶ Surkis 188

⁴¹⁷ Cendrars 34

Lang does not simply break hearts, he destroys them. Further presenting this character as a heartthrob, the narrator continues his description of Lang, who “avait les yeux prenants, des dents de perle sous sa moustache conquérante et, comme beaucoup d’ouvriers des faubourgs, une belle voix nuancée et bien timbrée, et la coqueluche de ces dames savait s’en servir en en faisant vibrer le charme dans les romances sentimentales dont il connaissait un répertoire inépuisable.”⁴¹⁸ This description frames him as an idol to women around him through his physical attributes once again. Yet even in this description of how Lang seduces women, his feminization distances his masculinity from his sexuality. This description and context serve well to understand these larger concepts of masculinity and sexuality. While Lang’s sexuality is a dominant part of his identity, it does not compensate for his other feminized attributes.

To be sure, according to Surkis, fierce heterosexuality is imperative to masculinity within the military as well as within all French citizens. However, she describes this required heterosexuality as “married heterosexuality”;⁴¹⁹ thus Lang’s actions of sending letters and photos to multiple women surely are contrary to that ideal, as the concept of married heterosexuality in this context implies monogamous, State-approved heterosexuality, which is more limited than heterosexuality alone. Here we see then that sexuality and masculinity do not necessarily work in tandem to define what it means to be a man, in spite of the desire for these concepts to coalesce and define each other. Butler confirms that gender does not determine sexuality, writing, “sexuality does not follow from gender in the sense that what gender you ‘are’ determines what kind of

⁴¹⁸ Cendrars 34-5

⁴¹⁹ Surkis 1

sexuality you will ‘have.’”⁴²⁰ She makes it clear that there are two forms of identity that are not dependent on each other, and the character of Lang provides a textual example of the separation between sexuality and gender. If the imposed structure of the hierarchy were accurate, Lang’s aggressive heterosexuality would suggest that he would be a fully martially masculine man. Yet his gender expression does not coincide with this version of masculinity. As Butler argues, sexuality is “not constrained by gender” and gender is “not predetermined by forms of hegemonic heterosexuality.”⁴²¹ Lang’s sexuality takes on the form of hegemonic heterosexuality in its aggressiveness, but his gender expression is not in line with hegemonic masculinity.

The narrator reveals Lang as a masculine figure of seduction, and then he reverses this characterization, pointing to the character’s negative attributes that do not fit with martial masculinity in the face of war. Although he is a seducer of women in the “ateliers du faubourg Saint-Antoine et les bals de la Bastille,”⁴²² “au front, privé d’adulation et des succès faciles auxquels il était habitué, Lang avait tout simplement le cafard, et il dépérissait.”⁴²³ Depression is not something that a strong warrior should experience. Faced with war and violence, those situations that are purely masculine—with supposedly no female involvement—Lang crumbles. Lang’s state of mind raises the question, “Pourquoi s’était-il engagé?”⁴²⁴ The answer is:

Pour faire comme tout le monde, parce que le mari de sa sœur était
 artilleur, pour acquérir la nationalité française, par enthousiasme, par

⁴²⁰ Butler, *Undoing Gender* 16

⁴²¹ Butler, *Undoing Gender* 54

⁴²² Cendrars 35

⁴²³ Cendrars 35

⁴²⁴ Cendrars 35

amour pour la France? Non, tout simplement parce que l'uniforme lui seyait, et il s'était faire tirer des centaines de photographies, dans des poses avantageuses, photos qui alourdissaient son sac, mêlées qu'elles étaient aux centaines de lettres de femmes qu'il recevait quotidiennement et dont il nous lisait certains soirs des extraits qu'il accompagnait de commentaires appropriés et plutôt tristes parce que lourds de souvenirs et de regrets.⁴²⁵

His reason for enlisting is rather contradictory. Though uninterested in war, he enlisted because the uniform suited him, an image that sets him firmly in the role of the “dandy.” Narcissism, rather than duty, leads him to war. His motivation rests in the tropes of a soldier's traits to the outside world—bravery and honor. These traits are in contrast to the reality of the soldier's role to him, which is more in line with violence and death. He is more concerned, thus, with how others see him than with his own survival, an extreme representation of narcissism. There is no love for family or France, no desire to become a part of this national identity, but rather a superficial—yet still incredibly dangerous—way of performing this certain type of masculinity.⁴²⁶

⁴²⁵ Cendrars 35

⁴²⁶ While this example is outside of the French 1914-1918 context, Belkin writes of male-to-female transpeople who struggle to accept themselves in the era of the Vietnam War. In their struggle, they “often seek to prove to themselves they are not transgender [and] sought to demonstrate the correctness of their given, biological sex by affirming their masculinity beyond doubt” (Belkin 1). To accomplish this goal of proof, they join the military, volunteering for extremely dangerous missions, believing that their survival would prove their masculinity, which would “confirm their biological status as men and hence not transgender” (Belkin 1). Should they die, that would be the price they would pay to prove their masculinity. While Lang's case is different from these instances to which Belkin refers, the connection between Lang going to war for the access to the title

There is additionally a disconnection in the way that Lang uses the photographs in concert with the military. He sends letters to women, asking the narrator to take more pictures of him posing with a variety of guns and grenades.⁴²⁷ These poses signal an abstract relationship with the military and its tools. He sees the advantage to positioning himself near weapons and in documenting evidence to send to women, but he does not actually have the personality to put those tools to their proper use, or to risk that the enemy use those tools on him. He receives a new post where there is supposedly less risk, summing up this aversion to war in the face of his interest in the image of war well, as he is “fier de ses galons de caporal mais surtout heureux de s’écloigner du front.”⁴²⁸ He sees the value of the guns in terms of what they say about him—they position him within the hierarchy for the women to see—but that is only the image, not the reality. Of course, this new post leads to his death, as he is killed in transit to his new location. As Laurent Drapier argues, Lang, as well as many other characters that the narrator describes, dies as he lives, writing that the novel consistently “[fait] mourir ses protagonistes *comme ils ont vécu* ce qui révèle [...] la formule nécrologique qui transforme *a posteriori* le désordre d’une vie en un destin orienté.”⁴²⁹ A shell lands on his carriage and in the wreckage, his mustache, an important *outward* marker of his masculinity, lands on the façade of a barber’s boutique.⁴³⁰ It is possible to read the description of the mustache’s landing spot as a hairdresser for women, rather than a barber (the text uses the term *coiffeur*), which

and the wardrobe shows converging (though certainly less dire) examples of going to war to demonstrate that you are a certain ‘type’ of person within the domain of masculinity.

⁴²⁷ Cendrars 36

⁴²⁸ Cendrars 37

⁴²⁹ Drapier 328. Author’s emphasis

⁴³⁰ Cendrars 39

adds an additional layer of textual richness to Lang's death, possibly feminizing this one physical marker of manly masculinity he has. For him, at least, the version that he wants to project, that of a more virile masculinity, is what remains after his death through his mustache, and his comrades, appreciating his esthetic very well, do provide the mustache with a proper burial. Though the rest of his body is decimated by the blast, his remaining mustache is final "evidence" of his performative masculinity.

Given Lang's state of mind during his time in the trenches, it is not surprising that he takes to manufacturing "evidence" of his masculinity. He replies to his many lovers with letters "pleines de hauts faits héroïques imaginaires qui devaient les faire trembler et des couplets les plus enivrants de ses chansons qui devaient les faire pleurer."⁴³¹ In these letters, not only do his imagined acts of war heroism serve to establish him as the brave soldier that all real men are to be, but he also intends both the letters and the couplets to give him power over the women. He intends for his heroic deeds and his poems to make them tremble and cry, that is to say, he implements them to force these women to lose control of their emotions. While Lang himself has no control over his own emotions in the trenches, he no doubt has power over the emotions of women who are far from him. His letters serve to make up for his own insufficient military masculinity and his loss of power over the self that stems from this war experience. As for Rossi, the trenches create an atmosphere in which it is difficult, yet expected, for one to attain a status of "highly masculine." Lang's reality was far from that of a heroic soldier using his weapons to

⁴³¹ Cendrars 36

save the nation, rather, the narrator uses terms to describe him that position him in a feminine space rather than a masculine one.

In the narrator's description, "c'était un soldat à la con. Quand son cafard le tenait il était plus emmerdant qu'une femme qui a ses affaires. Il avait la migraine, broyait du noir, était franchement insupportable et faisait de la neurasthénie aiguë. Encore un hystérique."⁴³² With his depression, Lang not only loses his masculinity but also becomes feminized to the extreme.⁴³³ This character creates a male version of a feminine space, highly emotional and even with certain bodily attributes of biological women, as this comparison of him is not just to a woman, but to a sexist and stereotypical notion of female hysteria.⁴³⁴ This image clearly places the dandy within a non-masculine space coded as a feminine, hysterical one. Using feminine tropes, the narrator portrays this character as heavily emotional in a very specific way. This is not to say that the emotional cannot exist within a masculine space, as Rossi expresses intense emotions in his own way. However, Rossi's emotion is more in line with that of a child. Nevertheless, both of the characters who demonstrate extreme emotions do so in an altered masculine space, away from that of martial masculinity.

The possibility of an altered masculinity does not necessarily mean that dandyism cannot be an acceptable kind of masculinity. While gender sociologist Christine

⁴³² Cendrars 36

⁴³³ The narrator uses the same word, hysterical, to feminize Rossi, whom he respects.

⁴³⁴ Lang's type of masculinity seems to allow the narrator to use many kinds of sexist tropes against women, but within the context of a man. This sexism can be read as the narrator's way of demonstrating that he does not approve of Lang's version of masculinity, even though the narrator primarily criticizes Lang's actions in relation to his abilities as a soldier.

Castelain Meunier writes that this form of masculinity has traditionally implied a certain kind of power and rank, especially in France,⁴³⁵ the dandy version of masculinity is simply insufficient for a wartime situation. The narrator in fact does refer to Lang as having a “beauté virile,”⁴³⁶ showing that this kind of masculinity is one that can be accepted. Lang projects an esthetic of what gender and queer theorist Judith/Jack Halberstam⁴³⁷ calls female masculinity. She defines this type of masculinity as “the rejected scraps of dominant masculinity in order that male masculinity may appear to be the real thing.”⁴³⁸ The “real thing” to which she refers she names “heroic masculinities,” which “depend absolutely on the subordination of alternative masculinities,”⁴³⁹ a form of masculinity that is closely aligned with my notion of martial masculinity. Martial masculinity is a form of heroic masculinities. Halberstam defines female masculinity through a series of cultural examples from film and literature, the most well-known being James Bond from *Goldeneye* (1995). Similar to Lang, his masculinity is one based on his dress, as his style is debonair.⁴⁴⁰ Though perhaps Bond is more successful in his role than Lang, who fails utterly as a soldier, their masculinities revolve around their esthetic performance. For both of them, masculine power comes only from props that create a certain esthetic, rather than from within. Similar to Lang, Bond is surrounded by more

⁴³⁵Christine Castelain Meunier. *Les métamorphoses du masculin*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2005, 55-6.

⁴³⁶ Cendrars 68

⁴³⁷ Halberstam goes by both Judith and Jack, and interchanges between the personal pronouns “he” and “she.” Because the publication of this book was under the name Judith, and since this is the only work of hers that I use, I will refer to Halberstam with the female pronoun.

⁴³⁸ Judith Halberstam. *Female Masculinity*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1998, 1.

⁴³⁹ Halberstam 1

⁴⁴⁰ Halberstam 3

stereotypically masculine figures than himself, and, in Bond's case, some of them are biological women.

Lang's female masculinity would theoretically serve as a contrast to more "male" masculinities (e.g. heroic or martial), if only such characters were present. The narrator's account does well to portray the varied nature of masculinities, demonstrating a group of men in a completely martially masculine environment, none of whom ever fully, perfectly embodies martial masculinity. While Lang's role as a soldier is one of martial (or heroic) masculinity, he took on this role only to feed his own narcissism through the uniform and other "props" of war. His preference of expression is one of female masculinity, given his esthetic choice in terms of how he presents himself to the world. It is important to note that female masculinity is not *feminized* masculinity. To be sure, the narrator's description of Lang feminizes him, but only through his depressive, hysterical state, not through his projection of the esthetic of female masculinity, thus creating a separation between his depressive mood and his version of masculinity. By not feminizing him in terms of this esthetic, the narrator suggests an acceptance of alternative masculinities, just as he does when accepting Rossi's "masculine failings."

Cendrars's novel provides a way of examining martial masculinity through characters whom, excluding Lang, the narrator accepts in spite of their failure to attain institutional martially masculine status. With the exception of Lang, whom the narrator does not accept, these characters reject the institutional hierarchy without question. Through their varied actions, these characters demonstrate the success of their alternative

hierarchies. As I continue this chapter, I will examine the presence of hierarchies, alternate and institutional, in representations of race.

Henri Barbusse's *Le feu*

Of all the texts written by men that I examine that I examine in this dissertation, Barbusse's *Le feu* contains the most encounters between African and European soldiers, although in contrast to the nursing narratives that I explored in the previous chapter, this text does not frequently depict interactions between the European soldiers and the colonial troops. As we saw in my first chapter on soldier identity, the characters of *Le feu* see the African soldiers as superior to them with regard to the qualities of a soldier, that is to say, martially masculine qualities. The Frenchmen refer to the Africans as "real soldiers" due to their ferocity and bravery, while they see themselves as "mere men."⁴⁴¹ Leonard V. Smith examines the French soldiers and their African counterparts in this novel, writing, "Barbusse positioned 'man' midway on a spectrum between clearly effeminized staff officers and perversely hyper-masculine colonial soldiers, particularly Black Africans."⁴⁴² This comparison offers a way of seeing how these characters exist within the hierarchy of masculinity, where hyper-masculinity is useful only in war, but too threatening to the "effeminized" white men once the battle is over. In the text, the narrator describes how the French soldiers see the Africans, "Ils imposent, et même font un peu peur. Pourtant, ces Africains paraissent gais et en train. Ils vont, naturellement, en

⁴⁴¹ Barbusse 52-3, See Chapter one for more analysis on the distinction these characters make between "men" and "soldiers."

⁴⁴² L.V. Smith, *The Embattled Self* 70

première ligne. C'est leur place, et leur passage est l'indice d'une attaque très prochaine. Ils sont faits pour l'assaut."⁴⁴³ The African soldiers thus hold a certain meaning, partially of impending danger, but also of protection. Their ferocity and their supposed “natural” ability to be at the front lines—“c’est leur place”—serves to protect the French soldiers.

The Africans thus hold an interesting and very complex position within the military hierarchy. While the Frenchmen see the Africans as better soldiers, thus theoretically positioning the Africans at a higher level of the institutional military hierarchy, their race lowers their status. These men are seen to be good at fighting, and at being at the front lines, but in reality, it is because of their race, which is seen as inferior, that the military puts them in that position. These soldiers engage in behavior that would theoretically position them properly within Foucault’s version of the male ethic, where they are on the front lines, prepared to “penetrate” the enemy (and possibly enjoy it, since the narrator describes that they were “made” for the front lines). Yet, they are unable to actually step into the hierarchical position that this behavior would normally allow, due to their race. The structures of power that usually dictate positions in the hierarchy collide for these particular soldiers. The colonizers stereotype them as virile in the war-like sense of the word, but their race takes that virility too far in the eyes of the colonizers. Thus they must maintain a position on the frontlines, placing them in added danger. The mixture of war and race confuses the hierarchy, as the Africans are very valuable, because of their lack of value.

⁴⁴³ Barbusse 51-2

Since their value is that they have no value, they can be on the front lines. While the ways in which the French soldiers talk about the Africans would suggest that there is respect for these men in France, their position in the war shows that while certain groups, such as these French soldiers, may respect what these African soldiers do and their role in the war, the State does not respect them as humans. Rather, they respect the Africans as war machines. By framing the Africans as soldiers and themselves as men,⁴⁴⁴ the Frenchmen are, in a way, dehumanizing the Africans. The African soldiers are the ultimate form of martial masculinity, which is necessarily disposable, as these men must risk their lives for the sake of the nation. By maintaining a separation between themselves and the “disposable” African soldiers, the French men are able to deny their own disposability in the eyes of the State during war.

Barbusse’s characters “recognize” these African soldiers—they acknowledge their power and the ways in which these men are martially superior to them. As I noted in my analysis of race in Chapter two, Fanon argues that the colonized needs recognition by the colonizer: “c’est de la reconnaissance par cet autre, que dépendent sa valeur et sa réalité humaines.”⁴⁴⁵ Yet given the position of the Africans during this war, the recognition by soldiers is insufficient for the full humanization of the colonized. The recognition needs to come from a position of power, and not only from an individual or a group of individuals, but from the high levels of the official hierarchies. While the narrator may recognize the important role of the African soldier in the war, the description of their ferocity borders on animalistic: “leur acharnement à l’assaut, leur

⁴⁴⁴ Barbusse 52

⁴⁴⁵ Fanon, *Peau noire* 176

ivresse d'aller à la fourchette, leur goût de ne pas faire quartier.”⁴⁴⁶ Thus, the French do not recognize these men as fully human, keeping them on the front lines, the most at risk, with the least power. The recognition of the French soldiers towards the Africans is more a recognition of an animalistic or machine-like power, rather than a human power that the individual is able to control. Due to their more vulnerable position in the trenches, on the front lines, the African soldiers do not control their own power, and therefore the recognition they do obtain is not sufficient to humanize them.

It is not only in the context of the African soldiers that Barbusse's white characters discuss race, but they also refer to race among themselves, in the more general sense of the “human race.” While the narrator uses the French term “*race*,” he seems to be most specifically referring to the distinction between those who benefit from the war, and those who do not.

Le spectacle de ce monde nous a enfin donné, sans que nous puissions nous en défendre, la révélation de la grande réalité: une Différence qui se dessine entre les êtres, une Différence bien plus profonde et avec des fossés plus infranchissables que celle des races⁴⁴⁷: la division nette, tranchée—et vraiment irrémissible, celle-là—qu'il y a parmi la foule d'un pays, entre ceux qui profitent et ceux qui peinent..., ceux à qui on a demandé de tout sacrifier, tout, qui apportent jusqu'au bout leur nombre,

⁴⁴⁶ Barbusse 52

⁴⁴⁷ The term *race* in French has various meanings, and in this specific instance, the narrator uses it in general distinctions among people and communities, rather than specific racial divisions, in the English meaning of the term.

leur force, et leur martyre, et sur lesquels marchent, avancent, sourient et réussissent les autres.⁴⁴⁸

The narrator understands very clearly the larger meaning of hierarchy that war reveals. While within the military, there is an official and unofficial hierarchy, there are also, as the narrator describes them, the larger structures of power that contribute to war that are more severe than general distinctions among and between people. His use of *race*—more in the French meaning of the term relating to a broad way of categorizing people with similar characteristics or backgrounds—takes on these distinctions. From his experience, he sees that those who benefit from the war do not fight, and do not risk anything, while those lower in the hierarchy gain little from the war and risk a great deal.

Rather than a hierarchy with various levels, the narrator sees a division of two groups, with one in power and the other with none. This way of understanding war goes contrary to Butler's assertion that the community ought to be more important than the individual when it comes to vulnerability and loss.⁴⁴⁹ While in *La main coupée*, there is a sense of community across borders, when Ségouâna and the narrator help the wounded German soldier, Barbusse provides a scenario and view of his characters that demonstrate the selfishness of war. While Smith argues that within *Le feu*, "survival would be entirely collective,"⁴⁵⁰ I see Barbusse's narrator arguing against the idea that war is collective, but rather that the individual is lost in the war, as this conflict spans so many people who have no control over the process. One character proclaims, "Chacun pour

⁴⁴⁸ Barbusse 268

⁴⁴⁹ See the section in this chapter on *La main coupée*.

⁴⁵⁰ L.V. Smith, *The Embattled Self* 69

soi, à la guerre!”⁴⁵¹ Thus, survival is individual. These words go contrary to the actions in Cendrars’ text, and thus are directly in opposition to the notions of *fraternité*.⁴⁵²

Conclusion

Even though these two texts take on opposing views of the war, the individual, and the community, both offer alternatives to the official military interpretation of hierarchy. While Barbusse’s version suggests two basic groups, the haves and the have-nots, Cendrars’ version suggests a more inclusive interpretation of the brotherhood, thus eliminating the military hierarchy.

What is most striking about both versions of hierarchies is that they eliminate martial masculinity as the key to the top of the hierarchy. Those in power for Barbusse are not the most martially masculine, in fact they are the ones who do not fight and who do not risk their lives. It is in fact the Africans, the group perceived by the characters to be the most martially masculine, who are at the lowest end of the hierarchy, suggesting that dying in war while demonstrating martially masculine qualities does not prove power, but rather reveals a lack of power.

This analysis of institutional hierarchies demonstrates how weak institutions really are when it comes to individual behavior. To be sure, hierarchies are powerful in the larger context, but on a case-by-case basis, people are able to reject their authority. Instead of maintaining these institutional hierarchies, these characters all impose their

⁴⁵¹ Barbusse 35

⁴⁵² See Chapter one for the ways in which these characters do come together through their actions, despite their rhetoric.

own priorities and judgments on their community, whether that serves to bring everyone together or to demonstrate the solitude of a soldier.

While attempts to participate and gain status in the institutional hierarchy fail characters like Mireau and Lang, those who enact alternative versions gain more recognition. However, because it is war, they still may not necessarily survive. Given that institutional hierarchies are vertical and masculinity exists along a spectrum, which is horizontal, they do not necessarily match up, unless the interpretation of that horizontal spectrum of masculinity is through hierarchy, as occurs in the military. In the end, when there is a rejection of militarized masculinity, it becomes clear that institutional hierarchy cannot predict the status of an individual in a group, or where these characters fall on the spectrum of masculinities. Rather, rejecting the institutional hierarchy tends to lead to a stronger community in the trenches.

Chapter 4: Militarized Spaces: Hierarchies of Masculinities Outside the Trenches

The hierarchical nature of gender and war necessitates further analysis of hierarchy within a broader definition of war literature. While the previous chapter focuses on hierarchies within the trenches, and thus specifically within texts or films that fit into the war genre, this chapter examines how these masculine hierarchies function outside of the trenches, but still within a militarized environment. Both in and out of war, there is a hierarchization of masculinity. Connell elaborates on the highest rank of masculinity, hegemonic masculinity:

[T]o recognize diversity in masculinities is not enough. We must also recognize the relations between different kinds of masculinity: relations of alliance, dominance, and subordination. These relationships are constructed through practices that exclude and include, that intimidate, exploit, and so on. There is a gender politics within masculinity.⁴⁵³

By examining hegemonic masculinity and masculine hierarchies outside of the trenches, I hope to demonstrate that this type of gender hierarchy and the politics of masculinity permeate everyday life. The military or militarized settings I present through these literary and filmic depictions emphasize gender expectations. The privileges these settings offer or revoke often dictate how an individual fits into his or her world.

⁴⁵³ Connell, *Masculinities* 37

Two texts that I examine in this chapter contain significant emphasis on the body. In Benoîte and Flora Groult's novel, *Journal à quatre mains* (1962), corporeal masculinity, that is, the physical attributes related to paradigms of masculinity, has value. The characters demonstrate this value through their detailed descriptions of male bodies. In Robert Antelme's memoir, *L'espèce humaine* (1947), corporeal masculinity is absent, as the concentration camps "eliminate" bodies through starvation and systematic dehumanization. One might think that dehumanization is a largely theoretical and symbolic process—more related to a sense of self as related to the community than to any concrete physical consequences on the body. However, within certain situations, the concentration camp being one, it does have ramifications on the body, and as such, theoretical and concrete dehumanization meet through an individual's loss of bodily sex markers. In my analysis of this memoir, I examine how masculinity, in the face of bodily disintegration, becomes ever more important to the prisoners. As their bodies, serving as outward symbols of masculinity, waste away, these men signal with words the importance of a masculine presence in this all-male camp. Thus in different ways, both texts demonstrate the importance of corporeal masculinity. The third narrative has a connection to the body, as race is a focus. Race as a physical marker is only apparently superficial, because it has cultural meaning beyond outward markers that have deep consequences. I study Ousmane Sembène's film *Camp de Thiaroye* (1987) to examine hierarchy within race, where nationality reveals itself to be as significant and as divisive as race within the socially imposed hierarchy.

As Jean Gallagher has argued, it is important to examine non-combatant spaces during war to understand this type of conflict fully, especially with regard to the gendering of the experience.⁴⁵⁴ While the characters from the film *Camp de Thiaroye* did experience battle, and the viewer meets them after this experience, the protagonists of *Journal à quatre mains* and *L'espèce humaine* did not explicitly experience combat. To be sure, Robert was a resistance fighter, which arguably is a form of combat. The characters Benoîte and Flora Groult, however, did not participate in any type of fighting, but experienced the war during the Nazi occupation. Thus, their view of the conflict sheds light on the gendering of war in a unique way that combat narratives by male authors typically do not.

Benoîte and Flora Groult's *Journal à quatre mains*

Written by sisters Benoîte and Flora Groult in 1958, *Journal à quatre mains* is the story of Benoîte and Flora, two teenage characters living in Paris during the Nazi occupation of the 1940s. The novel covers the period just before the war began, through the French surrender, to the end of the Occupation, with diary entries dated between May 6, 1940, and January 18, 1945. These dates coincide historically with the period from the invasion of France by Germany and its subsequent occupation to after the liberation of Paris, though not to the end of the war. Although the authors experienced the occupation as teenagers themselves, they wrote this novel many years after the Nazis left France. This novel does not claim to be a journal that the authors started while living in occupied

⁴⁵⁴ Gallagher 3. See the introduction for the full quotation regarding this subject.

Paris, but rather is a fictionalized account of a period of time that the authors did experience.

Scholarship on this text is minimal, adding to the importance of including the Groult sisters' narrative in this project. More generally, historians and literary critics have not given writings about women's experience during the occupation serious attention, despite what Claire Gorrara, whose work centers on literature of World War II and the history of women in France, refers to as the prolific nature of these narratives.⁴⁵⁵ Most scholarly articles that reference the novel do so as part of a reading list focused on women and the occupation. Jane Dupree Begos, who writes about women's diaries, does engage somewhat further with the text. However, she writes minimally about the characters with no detailed analysis, "They learned that war does not prevent the seasons from changing and humanity from fulfilling its destiny."⁴⁵⁶ Flora and Benoîte move on with their lives regardless of, or perhaps driven by, the occupation. Gorrara points to *Journal à quatre mains* as a text that offers insight into the occupation and emphasizes the importance of examining such texts by women. She argues that, "Il suffit d'analyser ces récits pour mesurer l'importance de l'Occupation et pour la percevoir comme une période historique qui apporte aux femmes une véritable 'prise de conscience' de leur identité féminine."⁴⁵⁷ The text by the Groult sisters suggests its characters' awareness of or even awakening to their position, and, while influenced by their culture, they take on their own roles and independence because of the war.

⁴⁵⁵ Claire Gorrara. "Une prise de conscience féministe? L'Occupation vue par les femmes écrivains en France après 1968." *Clio. Femmes, Genre, Histoire* 1 (1995): 1-7, 2.

⁴⁵⁶ Jane Dupree Begos. "The Diaries of Adolescent Girls." *Women's Studies International Forum* 10.1 (1987): 69-74, 70.

⁴⁵⁷ Gorrara 2

These two teenage characters demonstrate a specific understanding of the male ethic in the context of the Nazi occupation, which reinforces notions of the weak French man compared to the powerful German soldier and, later, the Allied soldier, who is typically American in this novel. Growing up with a father who participated in World War I, Flora and Benoîte witnessed the general anxieties about masculinity that surrounded that conflict, exacerbated by the experience of the trenches. This influence informed their understanding of expected male conduct. Through this understanding, Flora and Benoîte offer ways of defining the type of behavior they expect from men. Early in the novel, the teenagers see that the Frenchmen who surround them are not measuring up to a certain masculine ideal in their role as soldiers, and the teenagers subsequently become less and less interested in them as their defeat deepens, and as more men are killed on the battlefield. Benoîte explains that they go out with their friends who have become soldiers only out of duty, writing that “Et puis, au bout de sept mois, le champ d’honneur ne donnait pas de moisson et on commençait à regarder les militaires avec condescendance, comme des enfants [...]”⁴⁵⁸ She did not like their efforts on the battlefield—the lack of “harvest” on the *champs d’honneur*. It is their failure to come home heroic, to have battled honorably on the battlefield, which leads to this lack of interest.

The French soldiers were beginning to lose, thereby “feminizing” themselves because masculine men always win battle, and, as we have seen, masculinity and femininity are defined in opposition to each other. The teenagers generally buy into the

⁴⁵⁸ Groult 17

stereotype—if a person is not masculine, he/she is feminine. Joshua Goldstein writes in his extensive study of war and gender on the cultural constructions of military masculinity. One such construction elaborates on men in combat, reflecting the teens' behavior towards the Frenchmen vs. the Allied soldiers:

[M]ale soldiers can better motivate themselves for combat if they can compartmentalize combat in their belief systems and identities. They can endure, and commit terrible acts, because the context is exceptional and temporary. They have a place to return to, or at least to die trying to protect—a place called home or normal or peacetime. In drawing this sharp dichotomy of hellish combat from normal life, cultures find gender categories readily available as an organizing device. Normal life becomes feminized and combat masculinized.⁴⁵⁹

The sharp distinction Goldstein offers between feminine peacetime or normal life and masculine wartime leads to a cultural construction of the dichotomy between male toughness and female tenderness.⁴⁶⁰ The teenagers, by giving the men their time and attention, provide home as a feminized space in contrast to combat. In continuing to spend time with these men, they show that their patriotism is strong, yet their interest in the men who are expected to hold up the *patrie* grows weaker and weaker, even though the war, especially compared to World War I that the nation had so recently experienced, is still relatively young. The teenagers pull their attention away and move towards the

⁴⁵⁹ Goldstein 301

⁴⁶⁰ The phrasing of the “tough” man and the “tender” female is from Goldstein, who writes on the “cultural construction of tough men and tender women.” He examines the different ways in which cultures have separated men and women, specifically within the context of war (Goldstein 251).

victors. The final reward for victory goes clearly to the Allied soldiers for whom the teenagers provide “home” as a feminized space, contrasting with the war and combat zone as a masculinized space. In rejecting the feminized French and welcoming the masculine allies into this space, they solidify the rules of the gender dichotomy.

Feminized men may not benefit from tender, feminized home spaces, as they did not properly display their toughness and perform their masculine war duty.

Yet Flora and Benoîte know this rejection of French men is not permanent. They know the fate of these men, and how it touches on their own fate, as Flora, the younger of the two, tells her sister, “Notre guerre à nous [...] ce sera d’épouser un manchot ou un cul-de-jatte. N’oublie pas, ma vieille, que ce service militaire-là durera toute la vie. On ne s’en tirera pas en dix-huit mois! Bien que nous soyons ici au bout du monde, nous commençons à sentir un petit vent de défaite nous souffler dans le dos.”⁴⁶¹ They see how the future injuries of their fellow Frenchmen will be the way in which they suffer their own war, by living well past the dates of conflict with men who have lost limbs. These physical wounds are evident on the body; they speak nothing of the hidden emotional wounds that these women will have to face in the men as well.⁴⁶² The implications of this loss are, of course, long-lasting financially and psychologically, as well as in terms of how each individual wounded man sees himself within the social hierarchy. In addition, as the narrative proceeds, it is quite clear that these teenagers, fifteen and nineteen years

⁴⁶¹ Groult 39

⁴⁶² In chapter two on nursing, we saw the way in which masculinity in war led to tremendous sacrifice through the patients’ injured bodies. Here, with the Groult sisters, we see that masculine bravery is not the only path to sacrifice in war, as Flora articulates the nature of an explicitly feminine sacrifice. She argues that the women who marry these men sacrifice for the war as well, once it is over.

old respectively at the beginning of the war, have a way of discussing men that prioritizes a certain set of values, while valorizing social status and physical presence. In taking the novel as a whole, the financial aspect of a soldier's loss of limb appears to be less important to these teenagers given the way in which they talk of and judge the men around them. Financially, they appear to be quite independent-minded, making a significant effort to educate themselves and earn degrees, eventually looking for professional jobs. Yet they see the toll that the war wounds will take on the men and themselves long term, even if they do not articulate the significance of that toll. To be sure, the teens do interact with young Frenchmen, and Benoite even marries one who later dies fighting in the resistance. As we see, however, as the novel progresses, they interact with the Frenchmen entirely differently than they do with the Allied tropes, who become entirely sexual beings to the teens through their victorious masculine status.

Early on in the war and the Occupation, Flora and Benoîte have only the Frenchmen and the Germans to compare. Their loyalty to their country, their disgust with their male compatriots, and their quickly repressed interest in the German soldiers are all embroiled together. The German men, though enemies and occupiers, have an aura about them that pleases and confuses the teens. Flora describes her encounter with German soldiers:

J'ai été en ville; je *les* ai vus, sur des voitures grisaille, camouflées à l'aide de branches, raides, rouges, immobiles, tout à fait des hommes normaux. Beaux pour la plupart, avec des nuques droites et des équipements tous

pareils, ce qui surprend. Ils n'avaient pas l'œil arrogant du vainqueur, ils étaient impassibles, à accomplir leur mission.⁴⁶³

Using *les*, rather than spelling out *les soldats allemands*, Flora denies partially to whom she refers. The use of *les* demonstrates, within her acknowledgment of the German presence, her refusal of this presence as well. She will not articulate precisely to whom *les* refers, but the reader understands. Her surprise is at the soldiers' normality. They were not arrogant, they were not monsters; they were in fact handsome. Guilt overcomes Flora, as shortly after writing this, she adds, "Oh! j'ai honte, j'ai honte d'avoir perdu; j'aurais tant aimé que ma France gagne!"⁴⁶⁴ She articulates her shame as related to the military loss, but it is likely that some of this shame relates to her feelings of attraction towards these German occupiers. These individuals represent how that loss came to be. Her shame related to the French loss causes her attraction to shift from the French towards the enemy. Because of their defeat, she does not see the French soldiers as attractive.

In spite of the real implications of this victory for the sisters as French citizens, the victory of the German soldiers made them seem appealing, as they are the opposite of the losing Frenchmen. With regard to martial masculinity, because of their victory, the Germans are at the high point of the hierarchy. This sentiment would in turn produce an additional type of shame, one Flora feels and expresses, in comparison with the well-expressed patriotism she feels. She does not articulate shame in her attraction, but rather in the military defeat. Flora may not be wholly aware of this reason for shame, or at the

⁴⁶³ Groult 57. Author's emphasis

⁴⁶⁴ Groult 57

very least, she may not be willing to admit to it, as an admission of shame would be a further, and stronger, admission of attraction to the enemy.

Through the shame she feels regarding the military defeat, the pain of seeing German invaders in her national space, and her immediate, small yet not insubstantial feelings of attraction towards these invaders, Flora establishes her own hierarchy of men and masculinity. The soldiers who have lost are not of interest to her at all, even though the country to which these soldiers belong is one towards which she feels intense pride. This loss of interest serves as a source of contradictions for her—how can she love France, but feel such disdain for Frenchmen? Even worse, how can she love France and see the German soldiers as anything other than terrible monsters? Certainly, even though it is because of the Frenchmen's actions—their presumed lack of heroism, virility, martial masculinity—that the French nation is now under the control of the Germans, these Frenchmen maintain a link to the nation she loves, leaving her confused and ashamed about her attractions and loyalties. In the end, martial masculinity, the victor in the situation, trumps for Flora any notion of patriotism. She prioritizes the victors over the losers, even though this prioritization goes against her own sense of *patrie*. To be sure, she keeps herself in check, and patriotism does override her interest in the martially masculine, victorious Germans, but it is not enough for her to develop (or maintain) an interest in the defeated Frenchmen. Instead of pursuing the feminized French or the

German oppressor, Flora lends her interest to no one, at least until individuals she considers to have a proper masculine presence enter her world.⁴⁶⁵

Toward the end of the novel, the liberation brings the Allied soldiers, who prove to be an acceptable outlet for the teens' desire for martially masculine men. Up to this moment, the teenagers implicitly defined proper masculine behavior as what it is not—in the negative—through the Frenchmen. With the Allied soldiers, they begin to define masculinity in positive terms instead of negatives ones, based on their behavior. The teenagers prefer these soldiers, who are allies at the top of the military and social hierarchy, as those on the winning side of the war. They describe the men physically in superficial detail, thus demonstrating their attraction to the corporeal martial masculinity that the Allied soldiers possess.

These men are politically acceptable, yet have not suffered long years of defeat and war, as have the Frenchmen. Benoîte expresses her desires: “J’ai envie de voir des hommes bien portants, qui n’ont jamais connu la défaite ni l’occupation; j’ai envie de

⁴⁶⁵ As authors writing this novel, the Groult sisters are brave in having their characters articulate these feelings of interest in the occupying soldiers. When this novel was published in 1958, the French culture has some distance from the war. Yet no doubt the feelings of animosity towards the women who fraternized with the enemy soldiers, *les femmes tondues*, were still fresh, especially for those women who were persecuted (*Les femmes tondues* were women whose heads were forcibly and publicly shaved as punishment for alleged relationships with occupying German soldiers). In writing this scene, suggesting that it is possible for a woman to be attracted to her occupier, these authors open up a conversation about the women who had relationships with the Germans and the way in which they were treated afterwards. The character's attraction to these men suggests that the women who did have a rapport with the Germans were not entirely “bad,” yet her obvious shame nevertheless articulates a sentiment beyond absolute forgiveness. At the very least, this attraction allows for a dialogue of what these *femmes tondues* did, and their punishment after the war.

bouffer du chocolat, du pain blanc, une meringue Chantilly.”⁴⁶⁶ These desires demonstrate two apparently distinct parts of life that once were everyday commodities, healthy men and sweets, but parts of life that the war has turned to luxuries. In pairing men with these foods, Benoîte transforms them into entities that she wants to consume, emphasizing her sexual appetite. Defeated men do not nourish her sexuality in the way that victors can, just as the rationing of sugar leads to feelings of culinary deprivation. The women’s desire for men who are different from the Frenchmen is fierce.

The sisters see the Anglo-American troops as completely unlike the Frenchmen. Benoîte is surprised that they do not insist on sex in the same way a Frenchman would,⁴⁶⁷ and questions the link between war and virility when her American male companion, “semblait passer la soirée avec moi pour le plaisir et non avec une arrière-pensée. La guerre rend pourtant les hommes deux fois plus hommes. Faut-il penser que les Américains ne sont pas des obsédés sexuels?”⁴⁶⁸ She points to a contradiction in her interpretation of masculinity. That is to say, in this specific instance, she notes the ways in which she believes men normally behave based on her own experience, thereby demonstrating the fluidity of the term “masculinity.” While to her, the combination of men and war equals excessive manliness, which clearly in her mind implies a heightened sex-drive, and therefore heightened sexual aggression, these men have been through war, but are not insistent on sex. The only way to understand this contradiction for her is to see Americans as less obsessed with sex in general. She does not judge the Americans as

⁴⁶⁶ Groult 502

⁴⁶⁷ Groult 518

⁴⁶⁸ Groult 523

less virile. Rather, she sees them as doubly virile because of their involvement and success with the war. To her, war is a stronger measure of virility than a high sex-drive. In prioritizing war victory over sex drive, Benoîte reveals what is truly important to her, an aggressive warrior, rather than an aggressive lover.

Benoîte's descriptions of various American soldiers reveal her thirst for men with a certain ease and confidence, further defining how these adolescents understand martial masculinity, which in her eyes the Frenchmen do not possess. She starts with quick images, noting height (using the English system, thereby appropriating the American culture and consequentially rejecting French culture and its men) and an additional piece of identity, "6 feet 4, from Texas...6 feet 3, médecin...6 feet 4, hongrois d'origine, dentiste de profession. Genre brun des Puszta avec un grain de vulgarité d'Europe centrale, mais tout cela passé au creuset de l'Amérique, nettoyé, désinfecté, infantilisé."⁴⁶⁹ Benoîte points out the disconnection in her description. Everything about the soldier is very adult-like (height, profession, etc.), yet this man comes across as infantilized. She suggests here that the melting pot of his American-ness positions him in a disinfected, cleaned child-like status—there is a freshness that she does not see in "stale" European men who have not had the benefit of the sanitized American mix of cultures.

In spite her use of the word *infantilisé*, her description makes it clear that she does not see this man as weak or child-like in the same way she sees the Frenchmen.

⁴⁶⁹ Groult 529. The ellipses are part of the original quotation, suggesting that she is casually listing these men with no focus on one in particular. She is not interested in just one, but in them all.

Here, the description of this soldier as *infantilisé* makes him seem fresh and youthful, in comparison to the Frenchmen who to her are childish more in terms of incompetence.

Then, she offers a more detailed description of a few American soldiers, “Beau—est-il besoin de le préciser? On n’a jamais de déception avec eux. Des dents de réclame de dentifrice, des épaules double portion, une démarche souple et sportive, bref, l’emballage est merveilleux.”⁴⁷⁰ This man has the physical qualities of a martially masculine male. She does specifically refer to *l’emballage*—pointing explicitly to her way of describing him physically. In this moment, at least, she is only interested in the outward qualities, the “packaging” of his masculinity, which holds up to a very specific masculine standard. She describes another man’s corporeal masculinity:

Rencontré une beauté ce soir [...] je vis, appuyé avec une nonchalance tout américaine à une balustrade, encore plus grand et mieux nourri que les autres, étroitement sanglé dans ses *pinks*, l’insigne d’aviateur au revers: un homme, si jamais homme il y eut. Le nez un peu court et plutôt relevé, donnant l’indispensable air d’enfance qui est l’uniforme des visages américains; la peau hâlée par la stratosphère; de fortes mains, des épaules d’orang-outan et toujours, cette surprise du chef: des hanches parfaites, étroites, qui corrigent la puissance un peu lourde du reste. En somme, le salé et le sucré réunis dans le même objet.⁴⁷¹

This description mirrors the elements of martial masculinity within my project, but presented only as being on the surface. The lack of the pronoun *il* when referring directly

⁴⁷⁰ Groult 530

⁴⁷¹ Groult 535-6. Author’s emphasis

to this man suggests a removal of his personhood—from this description, he seems to be there solely for Benoîte’s visual pleasure. This physical version of martial masculinity is not necessarily helpful in modern battle, practically speaking, but it exemplifies the myth of martial masculinity. This man, “un homme, si jamais homme il y eut,” is truly, according to Benoîte, *un homme, un vrai*. Benoîte’s ability to describe him positively using both youthful and animalistic terms shows the delicate balance of corporeal martial masculinity. With this balance, as well as with the balance of his slim hips compared to the rest of his powerful shoulders, he finds the middle ground between being overly powerful, and therefore out of control, and not powerful enough, which would render him effeminate. Benoîte even brings in food references again, reinforcing the importance of her own sexual appetite. In war, both food and men are “rationed” in their own way, leading to war-time deprivation. Her need for food, which she relies on for survival, is thus no different for her than her need for men, a certain declaration of the importance of female sexual desire. He is the perfect male specimen, similar to the visual of Dax from *Paths of Glory*.⁴⁷² Without a doubt, visually, this was the ideal type of man that armies wanted, but that the French army, at least according to the Groult sisters, was not able to provide.

Benoîte sees all of these men as superior to her own compatriots. Even in her analysis of the two of them as somehow child-like, she does not interpret this infantilization the way she does with the defeated French, but describes them rather as possessing a sense of youthfulness, and through this, strength. Again, they are not weak,

⁴⁷² See Appendix F for an image of military recruitment posters demonstrating this point.

defeated children like the French, but youthful, fresh victors with the physical attributes to back up their claim to victory. Based on the stereotype of martial masculinity, it is not surprising that these American soldiers won the war, as physically, they look the part. In both practice and appearance, they are victors.

In hierarchizing the men, the sisters reverse the male-female hierarchy. Their hierarchy involves judgment and often objectification of men, thus with the journal being narrated entirely from the female perspective, the reader learns little of the objectifying male gaze and everything having to do with a more subversive female gaze upon the men. The female gaze denotes substantial power. Kevin Goddard, scholar of literature and gender studies, argues that due to the relational way that we define gender, the female gaze and expectation of male behavior influences how we perceive maleness.⁴⁷³ To be sure, this gaze is generally not as objectifying as the male gaze tends to be, yet the *Journal* shows a version of the female gaze where men are objectified. The expectations that the Groult sisters express followed by their actions regarding their gaze suggest that their interpretation of maleness influences their decisions regarding men more so than their fierce patriotism. One important difference between the male and female gaze is that, while both objectify, the female gaze, at least in this example, admires power. Conversely, the male gaze takes power from the female, promoting and preferring submission. By ignoring the weaker Frenchmen, the Groult sisters prioritize their gaze, meaning their preferences and their sexual appetites, over their duty to be a maternal comfort to their compatriots.

⁴⁷³ Kevin Goddard. "'Looks Maketh the Man': The Female Gaze and the Construction of Masculinity." *Journal of Men's Studies* 9.1 (2000): 23-39, 24.

The adolescents' judgments seem largely to lack substance, being superficial in nature. However, these judgments do conform to the manly ideal at the time of the Occupation, stemming from a deep anxiety about men, masculinity, and male roles. These anxieties had significance during the Industrial Revolution and were articulated by the Dreyfus Affair.⁴⁷⁴ Benoîte's description of these men demonstrates the anxiety felt by the French loss during World War II, which in turn led to anxiety about French men, a sentiment that she and her sister thoroughly enact through their rejection of their compatriots and their embrace of the physically strong and durable American soldiers.

Victory highlighted the American soldier's stereotypically martially masculine physical appearance, making this the most appealing form of masculinity and physicality to Flora and Benoîte. To be sure, the male body serves as representative of the nation overall. According to Belkin,

Military masculinity can be as intimate and precise as the proportions of a particular soldier's body, but can also include an entire nation's beliefs about whether war is an occasion for service members to demonstrate toughness. Less important than the scope of the belief, practice or attribute under consideration is whether it legitimizes [an] individual's claim to power on the basis of a connection to the military or martial ideas.⁴⁷⁵

The particulars of this soldier's body, as described by Benoîte, are only important in terms of the nation they represent. There are some Frenchmen who might fit the same

⁴⁷⁴ See Chapter three for a more extensive analysis on this crisis of masculinity and its manifestation through the Dreyfus Affair.

⁴⁷⁵ Belkin 4

description she provides here of this American, but a cloud of defeat surrounds the French, making these physical traits impossible to see in the same light. A Frenchman's physical martial masculinity would not contribute to the legitimization of that "individual's claim to power"⁴⁷⁶ because of the French defeat. French physical masculinity is irrelevant when the Frenchmen are not victors. Americans won, therefore they demonstrated the toughness apparent in the particulars of the bodies of some of the men Benoîte encountered and to whom she paid attention.

Benoîte's focus on male bodies and the way in which she discusses male bodies with her sister (especially given their feelings about their own war extending into their married life, since they will be required to spend their lives with physically impaired men because of the war) demonstrates Belkin's point. His argument is that male bodies often serve as a stand-in for the nation—just as Benoîte saw some of the American soldiers as having originated from the "creuset de l'Amérique, nettoyé, désinfecté, infantilisé."⁴⁷⁷ Their bodies appear to her as having these particularly American qualities, even though she acknowledges their European origins by noting that one of the men possessed "un grain de vulgarité d'Europe centrale."⁴⁷⁸ The American type in the above physical description happens to possess the particular body that legitimizes his own specific claim to power within the military institution and within a militarized society. There is blatant attention to male physicality that fits precisely within the code of martial masculinity. This attention to physicality as a factor in this fictional diary of two young female

⁴⁷⁶ Belkin 4

⁴⁷⁷ Groult 529

⁴⁷⁸ Groult 529

teenagers during the war reveals the ways in which militarization and its hierarchization of men extended beyond the military as an institution and into civilian life. In civilian life, then, these teenagers adopted the masculine military hierarchy for their own interpretation of the world and the men around them. Flora and Benoîte thus serve to reveal and even establish what masculinity means within this particular context of war, occupation, and liberation.

Furthermore, Flora and Benoîte's priority of martial masculinity for their men reveals that they see everyday life as militarized. In this militarization of the 'home front,' they reveal the way in which masculinity becomes the primary concern, changing women's roles as a result. They become part of this process, and, according to Belkin, this "militarized, masculine authority requires women to play various roles as mothers, camp followers, soldiers, victims of sexual assault, and sex workers among others [...and] women often pay the costs associated with sustaining masculine power in militarized contexts."⁴⁷⁹ The teens do in fact see a high cost to living in a war situation, as Benoîte writes, "...toutes les Parisiennes entre quinze et cinquante ans passeront à la casserole. Et après? C'est la guerre! Et, depuis l'Antiquité, être vaincue pour une femme c'est régulièrement être violée."⁴⁸⁰ The tone here is quite flippant with a hint of irony. With her tone, she demonstrates her recognition of how militarized the culture has become—any form of violence is normal, and the teenagers simply expect it to be part of everyday life while surrounded by German, enemy soldiers. Benoîte feels sickened by

⁴⁷⁹ Belkin 6

⁴⁸⁰ Groult 28

the situation, saying that “la France est vendue, mais c’est nous qui allons payer.”⁴⁸¹

While these sentiments are in separate journal entries, they do demonstrate that part of the price that women pay in war is with their bodies. This price, as well as all the other sacrifices they will have to make, leaves Benoîte resentful of her situation.⁴⁸²

Even though there exists a militarized attitude in everyday life, Goldstein’s point regarding domestic, feminized home life vs. masculine combat is evident when Kurt, an American soldier, visits Benoîte during his time off. Benoîte modifies her life when he visits, as he brings her goods normally not available due to rationing, and they live in a cozy, domestic manner, one that sharply contrasts with her normal life without Kurt. When he is there, “il a ses tiroirs; il connaît les bas-fonds de mes armoires; sa brosse à dents bavarde avec la mienne dans le même verre; il sait où sont les allumettes à la cuisine. Bref, c’est l’intimité, cette valeur de rêve en temps de guerre.”⁴⁸³ Yet, when he must leave for work several days in a row, Benoîte writes, “Que la vie est facile quand on ne vit qu’avec soi-même.”⁴⁸⁴ Even Benoîte’s own life becomes more domestic and more feminized when Kurt is home. She eats differently when Kurt is away, saving the good food for his return.⁴⁸⁵ It is thus the very presence of the masculine soldier in the home atmosphere that motivates the maintenance of the feminized home space.

⁴⁸¹ Groult 58

⁴⁸² Similar to the sacrifice she referenced earlier of having to marry wounded men, Benoîte articulates rape as another sacrifice related to war, again one that is largely feminine (though not only feminine, as rape as a weapon of war is used on men, though with significantly less frequency).

⁴⁸³ Groult 573

⁴⁸⁴ Groult 556

⁴⁸⁵ Groult 557

The presence of these non-enemy American men serves to demonstrate a true contradiction in the requirements of martial masculinity. This contradiction becomes clear with the realization that these characters never actually saw their Allied men, whom they admire so much, in full martially masculine action. Flora and Benoîte see them as figures of male dominance, or military victory, once that victory is already underway. They know from the radio that the Allied forces are coming in and will likely defeat the Germans, and the news they consume reinforces this understanding of the Allied men's position vis-à-vis the Germans. So the only evidence that these characters have of martial masculinity is the men's appearance—superficial markers at best—combined with their association with a victorious army. To be sure, the adolescent women never specify they want a war hero; they only want a man who has not been touched with defeat. However, here we see that the ways in which the teenagers see martial masculinity do not necessarily coincide with the reality of what it means to be a capable soldier.⁴⁸⁶

Hundreds of thousands of Frenchmen died on the battlefield, both in World War I and in the war the teens experienced. Dying on the battlefield in service of your country is the very definition of a martially masculine man, but this outcome does not benefit any given individual, as he cannot survive to tell of his masculine battle prowess.⁴⁸⁷ Any given French soldier could have embodied the traits of martial masculinity of the

⁴⁸⁶ Narratives of the trenches, most specifically Cendrars' text, make the point that the qualities of a good soldier within the unit do not always coincide with the qualities of a martially masculine soldier. The reality is different from the rhetoric.

⁴⁸⁷ I examine the question of the anonymous war death more closely in Chapter one, through an analysis of Barbusse's *Le Feu*.

battlefield, just as any given Allied soldier could have done so, but the teenagers favor those who won and those who did not get beaten down by war: the fresh-faced victors. The very fact of their presence proves that they avoided death, and therefore could not have been the fully sacrificing war hero, as this hero must inevitably die for his country. In dying for his country, this individual demonstrates a true willingness to sacrifice, a display that is impossible for a soldier who made it through the conflict. The theme of heroic French death during the Occupation does factor into the novel, but only briefly and without much background. Blaise, Benoîte's husband of a few months, dies of a wound as a member of the *maquis*,⁴⁸⁸ but the reader does not get any information as to how this injury happened. The teenagers never tell the story of war heroism, perhaps because they never learn this story. The reader only gets to see the implied war heroes of the Allied forces, the heroes by association. There is no discussion of any man's particular military ability, only of the Frenchmen's general defeat and of the American's superficial beauty and martially approved body type.

Thus, only the superficial aspects of martial masculinity actually come through in the novel. The characters judge these aspects as valid, placing these men at the top of the hierarchy. It could be that, similar to those in Cendrars' *La main coupée*, the men who survived rejected those martially masculine behaviors to save their own lives when the danger was high.⁴⁸⁹ This is not to say that their actions came from cowardice, though this is what the military structure might have you believe, and this structure spills over into

⁴⁸⁸ Blaise dies before Benoîte meets her American love interest.

⁴⁸⁹ See chapter three for more analysis on Cendrars' text, and the rejection of martial masculinity for survival.

the civilian life of the teenagers.⁴⁹⁰ It is simply that they learned how to preserve their own lives, which is arguably bad for the military's mission to fight for the nation, but positive for the individual.

According to Jeff Hearn and Keith Pringle, both sociological scholars of masculinities studies, men are typically unmarked with regards to their gender or sex identities.⁴⁹¹ Through the teens' judgment of the men, this novel serves to gender or to mark men. This marking inverts the traditional hierarchy where men are dominant. These two female characters demonstrate significant agency in dictating the type of men they desire, and the contexts in which they desire them. To be sure, this scenario is not entirely revolutionary in terms of gender roles, as the adolescent women do clearly demonstrate their preference as a very stereotypical view of masculine behavior, especially within their own context of war and occupation. Yet what these teenagers do show us is the variety of men they encounter, all of whom exist in a precarious situation.

War is not an action or state comprised uniquely of individuals, but rather is transformative in collective terms, influencing the nation more broadly. While individuals fight *in* war, nations fight wars as a whole. These individuals do not fight for themselves, but for the greater good of the nation. The French are undesirable through failure whereas the Americans are the opposite. The teenagers point out the differences

⁴⁹⁰ See my analysis of *Paths of Glory* in Chapter three for a narrative that deals with this question of cowardice as opposed to common sense in war, as interpreted by those higher in the military structure.

⁴⁹¹ Jeff Hearn and Keith Pringle. *European Perspectives on Men and Masculinities: National and Transnational Approaches*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, 1. Men in general and white men specifically, are unmarked as a category of people, while women and non-white individuals are in categories based on their gender and race. White men are in a "default" category of their own. This is likely the result of hierarchical structures of power.

between these two groups through their own sexuality. Genevieve Lloyd writes that traditionally, “Femininity, as we now have it, has been constituted within the Western intellectual tradition to be what is left behind by ideals of masculinity, citizenship, and patriotism.”⁴⁹² These young women, because of their sexuality, are far from left behind, but rather, this sexuality is palpably present throughout the diary, allowing them to reshape the traditional gender hierarchy in terms of expressions of their sexual desire. It is through their sexuality that they bring the feminine, themselves, to the forefront. Elaborating this initially rather ambiguous idea of leaving the feminine behind, Lloyd writes that

...in Western thought the manliness of war goes deeper than the idea that it is manly to defend the weak. The masculinity of war is what it is precisely by leaving the feminine behind. It consists in the capacity to rise above what femaleness symbolically represents: attachment to private concerns, to ‘mere life’.⁴⁹³

For Lloyd, war raises the masculine up in terms of status, forcing the feminine to the side. Lloyd describes the masculinity of war as predicated on victory. Yet the *Journal* offers two heroines who clearly do not allow men to leave them to the side. They do however push the men they consider not good enough, the Frenchmen, to the side. The defeated Frenchmen are frequently characterized as feminized at various points throughout history,⁴⁹⁴ which speaks to Lloyd’s point of the feminine as left behind in war. These two teenagers, who are adult women by the end of the novel, are clearly out of the house,

⁴⁹² G. Lloyd, *Selfhood* 75

⁴⁹³ G. Lloyd, *Selfhood* 75

⁴⁹⁴ Reeser and Seifert 29-30

stepping away from private concerns as the war proceeds,⁴⁹⁵ gaining knowledge on the activities at the front and on their fates as individuals in an occupied country. Their position as the occupied is paradoxically what allows them to get out of the home and into the public sphere. While they engage fully with an essentializing interpretation of what men should be, they reject, at least for themselves, certain assumptions about femininity. They are able to take on the female gaze without falling into the stereotype of the over-sexed, dangerous, aggressive woman, and they do not rely on men for their general well-being. They reject the possibility of marginalization, which they could easily settle into as women, but instead, they leave the restricted space of the home. In assuming the female gaze, and in stepping outside of the comforts of home, they take hold of what Claire Gorrara referred to as a “prise de conscience” of their feminine identity.⁴⁹⁶ The occupation ironically allowed them the “freedom” to do so.

Ousmane Sembène’s *Camp de Thiaroye*

In the historical context of World War II there are many versions of marginalized space that are more extreme than women’s space of home. Concentration camps as well as military transit camps were spaces where individuals were largely stripped of their rights and pushed to the margins of society, frequently because of their background. Some of the worst of these spaces were in Germany and other Nazi occupied territories, where the Nazi regime imprisoned and murdered millions of individuals they saw as

⁴⁹⁵ The exception to this is Benoîte’s domestic moments with Kurt. Ultimately, she rejects this life.

⁴⁹⁶ Gorrara 2

undesirable. Yet there existed other versions that were less severe but that marginalized individuals by restraining them to an enclosed space. In Canada and in the United States, the governments interned Japanese immigrants in camps due to fear that they were loyal to their native country during World War II, while soldiers of various wars were placed in transit camps to wait for relocation and repatriation. To be sure, some transit camps were just waiting spaces, but when the hierarchical distinction between the ones in the camps and the ones running the camps was already based in a relationship that led to marginalization and prejudice, the outcome resulted in further oppression.

Ousmane Sembène's 1987 film *Camp de Thiaroye* depicts one of these military transit camps and the events leading up to the massacre of African soldiers who had served in the French army during World War II as *tirailleurs*. Held in a transit camp outside of Dakar before being fully repatriated, the colonial soldiers demanded their full pay, rather than the half that the French officials were offering. The soldiers protested this pay cut as well as the generally poor living conditions in the camp. The French soldiers then opened fire on the colonial soldiers in the middle of the night. Laura Rice writes about the racial history of the French army. The French government had the colonial army fighting against the Germans in 1939, against the British through the Vichy government, then in de Gaulle's Free French Army. Later, in 1944, de Gaulle "gave the order to 'whiten' the French forces by withdrawing black African troops."⁴⁹⁷ These are the events leading up to the clash between the colonial soldiers at Thiaroye and the massacre by the French. The overall atrocious treatment these men suffered served as a

⁴⁹⁷ Rice 142

reminder that the men were simply re-entering the colonial system that they had left before the war.⁴⁹⁸ When the soldiers protested their conditions, “thirty-five colonial soldiers were killed, an equal number seriously injured, and hundreds more wounded. On the French side, no lives were lost, one African policeman was wounded, and three French officers suffered lacerations. Thirty-four POWs were charged, tried, and put in prison.”⁴⁹⁹ Just as in the colonial system, we see a mismatched outcome for the Africans, highlighting the power differential.

Like most of the other texts and films I examine in this dissertation, this film is a fictionalized account of a historical event, though the director did not himself live this experience. Catherine Ngugi, African Studies scholar, writes that Sembène sees his role as a filmmaker as that of a modern *griot*, and in this position, “he adopts for himself the role of social commentator and satirist, one who is part of— but apart from—the community he depicts. Like the *griot*, the historian and director has at his disposal any number of tools with which to embellish or highlight ‘indisputable facts.’”⁵⁰⁰ Sembène thus distinctly positions himself as an outsider-insider to the history he reflects through this film. Media studies scholars Maria Pramaggiore and Tom Wallis note that some scholars have argued for using the *Auteur* theory approach, signaling the relevance of taking Sembène’s biographical details into consideration when examining this film and suggesting that the central character, Diatta, is a reflection of a younger Sembène

⁴⁹⁸ Rice 144

⁴⁹⁹ Rice 142

⁵⁰⁰ Catherine Njeri Ngugi. "Presenting and (Mis)representing History in Fiction Film: Sembène's "Camp de Thiaroye" and Attenborough's "Cry Freedom"." *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 16.1 (2003): 57-68, 58.

himself.⁵⁰¹ Sembène's personal history of activism related to race and colonialism speaks to a connection between him and the character Diatta, whose actions point out racial and national inequalities.⁵⁰² As a whole, the film portrays the hierarchies of race and nation through the military setting and the established military hierarchy.

As part of the functioning of the hierarchy as it relates to who is placed in the most physical danger, the French military stationed the *tirailleurs* in vulnerable positions at the front. When they left the front, still under the control of the French military, their marginalized position did not change, even though they were on their own continent, because they were under colonial rule. The moment of the film that is of particular interest to me demonstrates how race and nationality come together to create unique hierarchical divisions, highlighting hierarchies within hierarchies in the same way that masculinity and war demonstrate hierarchies within masculinity.

One of the more central characters,⁵⁰³ Sergeant-Chef Diatta, a Senegalese *tirailleur* who has a higher position of authority within the African unit, leaves the camp to visit Dakar during his stay. The African soldiers were temporarily wearing American uniforms, and so while in town, he is mistaken for an African-American soldier, and receives treatment that is quite different than that he would have received had everyone known he was from Senegal. While Njeri Ngugi argues that the characters in the film appropriate the French language, making it "a tool for their collective liberation rather

⁵⁰¹ Maria Pramaggiore and Tom Wallis. *Film: A Critical Introduction, 2nd Edition*. Hong Kong: Pearson, 2008, 408.

⁵⁰² Pramaggiore and Wallis 408

⁵⁰³ Sembène's films, generally, have no single main character, demonstrating a preference for the collective over the individual (Ngugi 58).

than a means of their subjugation by others,”⁵⁰⁴ it is also true that Diatta appropriates American English to further his personal desires. As such, he “embodies the complex struggle associated with defining postcolonial and globalizing African identities.”⁵⁰⁵ Because he is educated and speaks very good English, he is able to mimic an American soldier’s language (and broken French) to ask for the location of a brothel—certainly not as monumental as using it as “a tool for [his] collective liberation,” but nonetheless, a means to demonstrate agency through his education. Once in the brothel, the women are very friendly to him, until he reveals his identity by ordering a Pernod rather than the more American whiskey.

By ordering a non-American drink, he exposes his origins, and while nothing has actually changed in his identity or his appearance, the prostitutes reject him, with one woman exclaiming to her madam that “Il y a un nègre ici!” The madam kicks him out of the brothel immediately. The French, white woman’s female sex is not enough to position her hierarchically lower than Diatta, as a non-white soldier, while his soldier status is insufficient to position him higher than the white, female madam. Race complicates the traditional sex hierarchy, where the male soldier would have authority over the female. His race works more against him within this social construction of authority than his sex and role in the military counts for him. While the script demonstrates for the audience the hierarchical difference between an African soldier and an African-American one, the camera angles show the hierarchy between the Africans and the French. This scene starts out with a pan shot of the brothel, showing the *mise-en-*

⁵⁰⁴ Ngugi 58

⁵⁰⁵ Pramaggiore and Wallis 408

scène as completely devoid of any hint of Africa—other than the flowers—or of the war. All outside influences have been eliminated, and as such, Diatta exists as an “invading” force in this space, reminding the johns (all white, mostly older men) and the sex workers (mostly younger, white women) that there are native people around them. The setting suggests that they would likely prefer to forget the existence of Africans in Africa. When the female employee calls for the madam, the camera angles tell the audience who is in charge of this space. While the worker calls up, she is shown through a high-angle shot, offering a sense of “looking down” on the brothel. When the matron responds, the audience sees her from a low-angle shot, visualizing her dominance of this space. Even though the rest of the shots are level, the audience understands who is in charge here, and the hierarchy of this setting—the madam rules over everyone, even the French johns.

This scene, perhaps not directly and factually related to the massacre that is portrayed much later in the film, is significant in that it involves a choice. By ordering a Pernod, rather than the more American whiskey, Diatta shows the disparity of prejudice between Africans and African-Americans, thereby adding a layer to how the viewer understands the position of the African soldier overall. He is in the lowest position possible even while in his home country. The American viewer could be especially enlightened by this scene, as this viewer may be aware of race relations within the United States, but perhaps not beyond.

Rejected for being African rather than African-American, Diatta reveals the hierarchy of race and nationality. In creating this fictional conflict, Sembène sets up the viewer to understand the process of hierarchy that influences the later historical conflict

created when the military attempts to withhold the colonial soldiers' pay, and the subsequent massacre. To be sure, in a later fictional interaction with an African-American member of the military police, there is no indication that African-Americans feel prejudice against or superiority towards Africans. However, the different treatment Diatta receives based on where the white French in the brothel think he is from is similar to R.W. Connell's explanation of the "patriarchal dividend," in which all men, whether they engage in sexist or misogynist behavior or not, benefit from these prejudicial policies and practices. Similarly, the African-American man benefits from better treatment while in Africa. However, this African-American MP sees no difference with regards to racial and national hierarchy between himself and Diatta, calling him "brother." In fact, Diatta impresses the African-American MP with his level of education and the remarkable list of books he has read, along with his knowledge of the United States.

When Diatta is mistaken for an American by the American military police and kidnapped by them, his education, something that could elevate him in terms of hierarchy (and does elevate him within the ranks of the African soldiers), hurts him. It is his ability to understand English—in addition to the American uniform—that leads the MP to believe he is an American soldier out without his papers. When his fellow African soldiers retaliate by kidnapping an American soldier, the main concern that the white French officers express regarding this kidnapping is the American soldier's national and racial status. The white French commanding officer demands that the men release the American right away, repeatedly emphasizing that he is both white and American, and

therefore should not be subject to this treatment. Again, we see a reinforcement that “American” and “white” are at the high end of the hierarchy, and through the interaction between Diatta and the white population of Dakar, that nationality matters more than race in getting good treatment.

Sociologist Stephen Castles argues “that the varying power of states at the different levels leads to a similar hierarchy of rights and freedom of their peoples, which [he refers] to as *hierarchical citizenship*.”⁵⁰⁶ The United States occupies a position of dominant power at this time. While France is under military threat and in need of help from this dominant power, it arguably enjoys a high status as a nation, at least due to the allied relation with the United States, as well as its relative economic, industrial, and imperial strength, in spite of the military defeat within Europe.⁵⁰⁷ At the very least, the French nation and its citizens occupy a higher status in Dakar compared to African countries and their citizens, as evidenced by the many white Frenchmen the madam did not kick out of the brothel. The establishment was not just for American soldiers. Thus even though Diatta fought for the French army, his rejection as an African demonstrates that he does not enjoy “citizenship,” even in the broadest, non-legal sense of the term. As an African, regardless of his specific national identity, he is at the lowest rung of Castles’ *hierarchical citizenship*. This hierarchy that is evident in the film is Sembène’s reflection of the historical situation at Thiaroye.

⁵⁰⁶ Stephen Castles. "Nation and Empire: Hierarchies of Citizenship in the New Global Order." *International Politics* 42 (2005): 203-224, 204.

⁵⁰⁷ With regards to national hierarchies, France could easily interpret its position as higher than the United States, as colonialists at this time saw the overall hierarchy of civilization as related to the idea of reaching “European civilization” (Rice 117). The United States, as a former colony, had reached that level with the aid and influence of European countries, France included.

The story of this massacre speaks to the colonial and national hierarchy, but also reveals the tenuous position of the African soldiers in this time after the war, due to their colonial status. For them, “German or French, Petain or de Gaulle, death camp or demobilization camp—it doesn't really matter: these *tirailleurs* suspended in no-man's-land seem to be the prisoners of a different war that is continuing on into the twenty-first century.”⁵⁰⁸ As colonial subjects, their national identity holds very little, even negative, social and political power. Their role vis-à-vis the French is contradictory; they are allies, technically, but they are colonized. This position makes them a forced ally—an ally by oppression rather than by choice. Thus, their real position of colonial subject becomes ever more evident when the French turn against them by withholding pay, undercutting the African role of ally. In the end, “Their protest was a living example of the self-fulfilling prophecy the French most feared, the ally had turned enemy, now armed and dangerous.”⁵⁰⁹ Their rebellion shows that the *tirailleurs* do not even see themselves as full allies to the French, knowing that their position is tenuous and their rights within this group non-existent.

Military rules are very strict, and there is significant importance in follow-through within military command. By not following through on the promise of pay, the French military undercuts the discipline that is so critical to the maintenance of order. In shifting away from their promises, and generally showing disrespect for those at the bottom of the hierarchy, the French military is more in line with German SS officers of the concentration camps than with standard military order. The film articulates this

⁵⁰⁸ Rice 145

⁵⁰⁹ Rice 144

comparison regarding colonial rule in general, when Diatta discusses the subject with a French officer, as well as through the traumatized soldier, Pays,⁵¹⁰ who, due to his torture at Buchenwald, believes that the transit camp is, in fact, a German concentration camp. Though more extreme, like the transit camp, the concentration camp is a place where rules and follow-through only matter for those on the bottom, while those on the high end of the hierarchy are free to behave as they please.

Thus, racial and national hierarchies find ties to military hierarchies.

Masculinities are implicit in this film, because of the all-male transit camp/military setting, but the racial and national component of hierarchy takes precedent over any hierarchy of masculinity. The African soldiers assemble as an oppressed group without indicating concern for masculine status. They even care for their weakest member, Pays, rather than reject him as unmasculine. Thus, they demonstrate that martial masculinity is not their primary concern. This low prioritization of martial masculinity is also evident in the casting of the actors in the film. None of the actors depicting these soldiers displays the physical characteristics of martial masculinity, with the exception of Pays, the traumatized soldier, who is the most visibly muscular.⁵¹¹

Casting choice is a distinction between film and literature, where the filmmaker must make a decision with regard to the message he wants to send the viewer based on the physical appearance of the characters. An author can choose to describe characters in

⁵¹⁰ The meaning of Pays' name, "country," is intriguing. As he is mentally the weakest character of the group, yet physically quite strong, his name speaks to the contradicting weakness and strength of his nation as a result of colonialism. They are colonized, and therefore have vulnerabilities associated with that status, yet there is a strong refusal of that oppression, hence Pays' powerful body.

⁵¹¹ See Appendix G

a very specific way, but this type of literary description still leaves significant room for interpretation from the reader. To be sure, the viewer of a film will interpret the characters he or she sees on screen with certain prejudices and expectations. However, the filmmaker “shows” where the author “tells.” Because of the visual nature of film, there is less room for interpretation, and the choice of the filmmaker carries more weight on the viewer’s interpretation than would the choice of the author. Sembène’s casting choice does undercut notions of required masculinity in the military, as Diatta, the *tirailleur* with the most authority, is thin and intellectual, characteristics in opposition to martial masculinity.⁵¹² Conversely, the most physically martial masculine character is Pays, who has a diminished mental capacity as a result of his experience of war, going against the stereotype of the physically martially masculine soldier. Rather than prioritize and judge martial masculinity within their ranks, their fight against the oppression of the colonizer gives them common ground, and it is through this fight that these soldiers prioritize their relationships. The factor of race, thus, appears to disrupt the emphasis on gender expectations, and even turns gender hierarchy on its head, as shown through Diatta’s interaction with the madam. The racial hierarchy therefore generates more power and further division than a hierarchy of gender or masculinities would. *humanity and masculinity work together to disguise the hierarchy among the prisoners as well as in relation*

⁵¹² See Appendix H

Robert Antelme's *L'Espèce humaine*

Robert Antelme's *L'Espèce humaine* (1947) well articulates hierarchies that exist in a paramilitary, confined camp setting. Antelme and his book are different from the rest of the literature and film I have chosen for this project. While the others are written mainly by individuals who lived through the experience they write about, and have created fictionalized accounts of that experience through their writing, Antelme frames his book as a non-fiction memoir. This categorization is clearly significant for Antelme, as he elaborates on his need to tell his story in the *Avant-propos* of the text. He writes,

Il y a deux ans, durant les premiers jours qui ont suivi notre retour, nous avons été, tous je pense, en proie à un véritable délire. Nous voulions parler, être entendus enfin. On nous dit que notre apparence physique était assez éloquente à elle seule. Mais nous revenions juste, nous ramenions avec nous notre mémoire, notre expérience toute vivante et nous éprouvions un désir frénétique de la dire telle quelle. Et dès les premiers jours cependant, il nous paraissait impossible de combler la distance que nous découvriions entre le langage dont nous disposions et cette expérience que, pour la plupart, nous étions encore en train de poursuivre dans notre corps. Comment nous résigner à ne pas tenter d'expliquer comment nous en étions venus là? Nous y étions encore.⁵¹³

Antelme articulates the need to bridge the physical, bodily experience with the language to share his time in the camps. As such, the status of this work as non-fiction and

⁵¹³ Antelme 9

furthermore, as testimony, is important for Antelme, as he shares his need to act as a witness with the reader immediately at the start of the text.

Antelme was a writer and Resistance fighter in World War II whom the Nazis had arrested and sent to concentration camps during the war. This text tells that experience. Thus, *L'Espèce humaine* is a work of witnessing and testimony. The other texts with which I engage blur the lines between fiction and testimony, inviting the reader to make connections between the author and the narrator while maintaining themselves as fictions. This is especially true when the author's name and the narrator's name are similar. Antelme's text does not simply invite the reader to see commonalities; rather, his story demands it, implying that everything that he writes is fact.

Scholars who have studied Antelme have focused on many important points in this work. Modern and contemporary "crisis and catastrophe" French literature scholar Martin Crowley points to Antelme's frequent reference to what it means to be human and how that is significant given "the vulnerability to which the prisoners of the camps were reduced."⁵¹⁴ Crowley examines the intersection between Antelme's writing on vulnerability and on humanity. He is most interested in examining how Antelme's "testimony configures this relationship between vulnerability, humanity, and testimony."⁵¹⁵ For another modern French literature scholar focusing on World War II,

⁵¹⁴ Martin Crowley. "Remaining Human: Robert Antelme's *L'Espèce humaine*." *French Studies* 56.4 (2002): 471-482, 471.

⁵¹⁵ Crowley 471

Colin Davis, the significance of Antelme's work lies in the hold he maintains on subjectivity, refusing to give up the "I" while under the threat of destruction.⁵¹⁶

The concentration camp, like the trenches, is a unique setting, where men and women are isolated from one another, thereby emphasizing their gender identity through the relationships they form. David Caron, scholar in 20th-Century French literature of the Holocaust and of queer studies, engages with Antelme's book as a means to study a specific kind of male group friendship that evolves only in certain situations. He characterizes this relationship:

This is the nature of male group friendship. Like the anal stage, it is not supposed to last. Socially, it takes place in temporary, evolutionary states of apprenticeship—schools, sports, military service, war, etc.—and exceptional situations in which the individual is threatened with disappearance—prisons or concentration camps [...] these are the contexts in which men, or boys, are allowed to have groups of friends, or *copains*—when they are in the process of learning to be men but not there yet, or when their existence as men is threatened.⁵¹⁷

It is precisely in these kinds of situations where expectations of masculinity will come into prominence, as these temporary all-male situations are, according to Caron, part of the learning process of becoming a man. Thus, the emphasis of masculinity in these scenarios serves to situate the men in these groups *as men*, and the pressure to fit in is

⁵¹⁶ Colin Davis. "Duras, Antelme and the Ethics of Writing." *Comparative Literature Studies* (1997): 170-183, 174.

⁵¹⁷ David Caron. "The Queerness of Male Group Friendship." *Entre Hommes: French and Francophone Masculinities in Culture and Theory*. Ed. Todd W. Reeser and Lewis C. Seifert. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2008. 251-266, 255.

high. They can learn from one another about what behavior is acceptable and what is not according to the values of their cultures, which serve to build the basis of masculinity. The martial situation of war and the extreme version of masculinity that accompanies it do not deter men from seeking out the knowledge they need for recognition as men in their culture; rather, it emphasizes this need.

In any situation, but most specifically within an all-male environment, masculinity undoubtedly becomes a factor when examining subjectivity and vulnerability. These men constantly face threats, and to highlight their own subjectivity, they must demonstrate that they are above the rest, as superiority within a gender hierarchy is a means to achieve superiority in general or at least to achieve survival. Both masculinity and survival in the camps rely on physical strength, thus to discuss subjectivity as a means of survival requires a discussion of that subject's position on the masculine hierarchy, especially when it comes to how that position relates to the body. Crowley references the power of the body in Antelme's text, writing "a bodily image marks a point of ultimate fragility, and at the same time gives on to a sense of resistance and, indeed, witness."⁵¹⁸ My analysis extends Crowley's statement to include how the gendering of that bodily image dictates both its fragility and its resistance. There is a commonality between the ways in which the camps operate and the ways in which gender operates—hierarchy. As I proceed, my analysis of the text demonstrates the vital role that masculinity, or at least the perception of masculinity, plays in the gender segregated camps.

⁵¹⁸ Crowley 472

Antelme's use of the word *homme* and the word *humain* reveals his position. In the French language, the term *homme* denotes a universal, non-gendered, non-sexed individual, but the ways in which Antelme frames what he means by *homme* reveal that he does have a stake in masculinity as well as in humanity, two concepts that he often equates with each other. Although Antelme's testimony strongly implies, with Crowley, that humanity is "what remains when everything else has been removed,"⁵¹⁹ humanity is not the only way of comprehending the self that is at stake in the camps. Masculinity becomes a central focus within the narrative as a way to distinguish oneself and fight for survival, though because of the ways in which the French language utilizes gender within its grammar and vocabulary structure, this focus can easily go unnoticed.

Luce Irigaray writes on the gendered nature of the "universal" subject, indicating that "d'abord que le sujet s'est toujours écrit au masculin, même s'il se voulait universel ou neutre: *l'homme*. N'empêche que l'homme—du moins en français—n'est pas neutre, mais sexué."⁵²⁰ The masculine is the implicit, neutral form concerning the subject. The term "mankind" (in French, often simply *homme*) is a general expression referring to all people. Yet, as Irigaray observes, this term is, in fact, sexed. In using *homme* to refer to all people, Elisabeth Badinter further argues that

depuis l'Antiquité grecque, le Français ne fait qu'entériner la tendance à assimiler les deux signifiés. L'homme (*vir*) se vit comme universel (*homo*). Il se considère comme le représentant le plus accompli de l'humanité. Le critère de référence. La pensée occidentale se partage entre deux approches

⁵¹⁹ Crowley 474

⁵²⁰ Luce Irigaray. *Éthique de la différence sexuelle*. Paris: Les éditions de minuit, 1984, 14. Author's emphasis.

apparemment différentes de la dualité des sexes. Soit on privilégie le modèle de la ressemblance soit on lui préfère celui de l'opposition. Mais dans les deux cas, on affirme la supériorité de l'homme qui justifie sa domination sur la femme.⁵²¹

Men, as the point of reference, exist as an unmarked, yet superior, category. The subject, as the dominant figure, is therefore male. To be sure, the title of Antelme's memoir does utilize the broader expression *l'espèce humaine*, which is specifically not gendered as the term *humaine* qualifies the species to which he refers. However, Robert's use of the word *homme* throughout the text is somewhat ambiguous. He sets aside the purposely gender neutral term *humain* throughout much of the book in favor of *homme*. While one could interpret *homme* in its traditionally unmarked manner, it can have a more specific meaning, and therefore deserves some analysis.

The relationship between the prisoners and the SS officers demonstrates a hierarchy, and therefore a value judgment placed on characteristics of a dominant masculinity. It is this relationship that reveals the social compulsion of masculinity in the camps. Robert writes of a desire for violence against his captors:

On croit que ce qu'on voudrait c'est de pouvoir tuer le SS. Mais si l'on pense un peu on voit qu'on se trompe. Ce n'est pas si simple. Ce qu'on voudrait, c'est commencer par lui mettre la tête en bas et les pieds en l'air. Et se marrer, se marrer. Ceux qui sont des hommes, nous qui sommes des êtres humains, nous voudrions aussi jouer un peu.⁵²²

⁵²¹ Badinter 19

⁵²² Antelme 88-9

He uses both terms, men and human, in pointing to this desire not to kill, but to humiliate, to torture a little. This type of violence is associated with (but certainly not limited to) a specific, isolated type of masculine behavior, as Connell tells us: “in contemporary Western society, hegemonic masculinity is strongly associated with aggressiveness and the capacity for violence” in many forms.⁵²³ The desire to humiliate an SS officer suggests a desire for dominance or control. This kind of dominance relates to a masculinity of power, Hearn and Pringle note, as authoritative and desired forms of “masculinities operate in the context of patriarchy or patriarchal relations.”⁵²⁴ These relations lead to “men’s structural dominance in society.”⁵²⁵ This structure establishes not only dominance over women, but also dominance over other men. In wanting to flip the SS officer upside down, Robert literally and symbolically wants to flip the power structure. The image of the SS officer with legs in the air asserts sexual domination as well, “feminizing” him by forcing him to occupy a sexually submissive position. Through this fantasy act of humiliation and physical displacement, the narrator would become the dominant man in this scenario, at the top of the prison camp hierarchy.

Equalization can result from an inversion of hierarchies. Robert’s fantasy is reminiscent of Mikhail Bakhtin’s “monde à l’envers.”⁵²⁶ During the period of carnival, hierarchies fall away, and everyone is considered equal.⁵²⁷ A turn to the carnivalesque is therefore an equalizer, as well as a method of starting over. Through carnival, “people

⁵²³ Connell, *War* 8

⁵²⁴ Hearn and Pringle 7

⁵²⁵ Hearn and Pringle 7

⁵²⁶ Mikhail Bakhtin. *Rabelais and His World*. Trans. Helene Iswolsky. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The M.I.T Press, 1968, 11.

⁵²⁷ Bakhtin 10

were [...] reborn for new, purely human relations. These truly human relations were not only fruits of imagination or abstract thought; they were experienced. The utopian ideal and the realistic merged in this carnival experience, unique of its kind.”⁵²⁸ Faced with the stark possibility of death in the camps, Robert’s fantasy permits him to enter a world where he can be reborn instead. He is able to enter, through fantasy, into a “second life.”⁵²⁹

Robert’s laughter borders on the carnivalesque as well, although it does not completely fit Bakhtin’s description, likely because in Robert’s case, his life is at stake, which is not the case in Bakhtin’s carnival. This carnival laughter is described as “ambivalent; it is gay, triumphant, and at the same time mocking, deriding.”⁵³⁰ Only the second piece of Bakhtin’s description coincides with Robert’s laughter, which is far from ambivalent. Rather, his laughter is his way of holding onto his life through his mocking of the SS officer. Robert clings to the mental power of mockery, the only power over the officer available to him as a prisoner. Through his laughter and in his fantasy to turn the SS officer on his head, Robert not only desires power, but also a re-establishment of the human relations that ought to exist, over the unequal relationships that do exist in this camp.

Although Robert uses both the terms man and human in this SS humiliation scenario, there are clearly stereotypical masculine attributes involving sexual and mental domination within it. By referring to “we” as men, then as human beings, he moves from

⁵²⁸ Bakhtin 10

⁵²⁹ Bakhtin 11

⁵³⁰ Bakhtin 11-2

a more specific identity to a general one. He refers to men as people who are male-sexed/gendered, and then broadens the way of understanding these men as humans, revealing his powerful investment in maintaining an identity as human *and* as masculine. Those who act in violence in this situation are both men and human, but they are not women and human.⁵³¹ Even though Robert shifts his rhetoric to the idea of the human, the initial specificity of man is what is most revealing. Had he simply stated that, as a human, he possessed a desire to humiliate, then there would be little cause to interrogate his meaning. However, with the primary mention of men, he reveals his precise perception of manliness. This understanding is one that relates manliness or masculinity to humanity and human behavior. In specifying, “ceux qui sont des hommes, nous qui sommes des êtres humains,”⁵³² he demonstrates that his conception of both man and human are interlocking. This space of the concentration camp threatens his humanity, and therefore his status as a man.

Masculine men are supposed to dominate, but within the camp, he is the one being dominated. The *espace concentrationnaire* eliminates humanity, but also, though hierarchy, it emasculates the men—that is to say weakens them, makes them helpless. The prisoner loses his masculinity, then slowly becomes distanced from his humanity, reaching the point of the *Muselmann*. Giorgio Agamben defines the *Muselmann* as “not

⁵³¹ The gender segregation of the camps as well as the language that Robert uses can both be ways in which to understand the gender distinction that Robert implies through his use of the term *homme*.

⁵³² Antelme 88-9

so much a limit between life and death; rather, he marks the threshold between the human and the inhuman.”⁵³³ Further explaining the *Muselmänner*, he writes

in this phase, they became indifferent to everything happening around them. They excluded themselves from all relations to their environment [...]. Seeing them from afar, one had the impression of seeing Arabs praying [because of their crouched physical stance]. This image was the origin of the term used at Auschwitz for people dying of malnutrition: Muslims.⁵³⁴

Thus, the *Muselmann* is as close to death as is possible. I argue, by extending Agamben’s definition of survival, that clinging to masculinity is a way to avoid losing humanity later on, as the loss of masculinity is the first step towards the *Muselmann*.⁵³⁵ Thus for Agamben, the *Muselmann*’s humanity is not totally lost; instead, he is in an in-between space. Agamben’s terms for humanity are distinct from Antelme’s because Antelme rejects the possibility of a loss of humanity. For Robert, humanity is the one

⁵³³ Giorgio Agamben. *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive*. Trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen. Brooklyn, New York: Zone Books, 1999, 55. More generally speaking, *Muselmänner* is the term used in World War II concentration camps for the lowest prisoners in the camp. It is a derogatory term, and those designated as *Muselmänner* are undesirable. They have given up all hope, and are dead in every way other than the most basic bodily function. They are closer to animals than to human beings, living off instinct alone.

⁵³⁴ Agamben, *Remnants* 43. Agamben credits knowledge of the origins of the term to an article by Ryn and Klodinski, which is cited as Ryn, Zdzislaw and Stanslaw Klodinski (Ryn, Zdzislaw and Stanslaw Klodinski. "An der Grenze zwischen Leben und Tod. Eine Studie über die Erscheinung des "Muselmanns" im Konzentrationslager." *Auschwitz-Hefte* vol. 1 (1987): 89-154.). This is the most commonly cited origin of the term.

⁵³⁵ This argument could be tenuous when considering the female camps, an area which requires and deserves further research, with an examination of concentration camp memoirs written from those who had experience in the women’s side of the camps. The maintenance of masculinity could nevertheless be the way of survival in the female camps, as it would serve as a show of strength, domination, and power, all of which would aid in survival in both male and female camps. Masculinity is not exclusively male.

piece of himself that the SS officers cannot take without his consent, even if he dies.

This loss is implicit in Agamben's understanding of the *Muselmann's* position, in "the threshold between the human and the inhuman."⁵³⁶ Additionally for Antelme, to avoid this space, then, and this potential loss of humanity, the prisoners must constantly reiterate their masculinity to one another, as a means to demonstrate their own dominance, however low on the hierarchy of the camp that dominance may be.

There is a hierarchy of men within the population of inmates that is dictated by the SS officers, which Robert describes as the strength and force allowing an inmate to have a privileged position in the camp, further suggesting that the loss of masculinity is the first to be eliminated in a path towards a loss of humanity:

Les Allemands admettaient ceux qui avaient la force de soulever les lourdes pièces et ils leur foutaient la paix...La force était la seule valeur qui risquait de les convaincre de l'humanité d'un détenu...Et l'homme fort avait alors d'autres droits que les autres et d'autres besoins; il avait lui, un homme à sauver en lui, un homme de bien, il avait le droit de bouffer, etc.⁵³⁷

Strength, to the SS officers, means humanity, establishing a hierarchy of prisoners.

Maintaining strength, a stereotypically masculine attribute, the prisoners are more likely to maintain their humanity in the eyes of the SS officers. Davis references the hierarchy of the camps, indicating that among the prisoners, an "aristocracy develops" around food

⁵³⁶ Agamben, *Remnants* 55

⁵³⁷ Antelme 217

and work.⁵³⁸ This camp hierarchy largely determines who lives and who dies. Within the hierarchies then, life and survival exist high on the hierarchy while death and destruction fall to the bottom. The Nazis left alone those at the top of the hierarchy due to their physical strength, as the Nazis saw value in this strength. There was a limited amount of food, and since the strong, surviving inmates get more food and live, the weak inmates get less, and do not survive. Strength is typically a marker of masculinity throughout history. Of particular interest for my purposes is a dictionary definition of masculinity from 1690, which offers a view of manhood that largely persists today, depicting men between the ages of 30 and 45. These men were to be “energetic, strong, virtuous, confident, and courageous.”⁵³⁹ Robert’s understanding of how the SS officers see masculinity is in line with this definition. He states here that a strong man is for them not only a good man, but human.⁵⁴⁰ Without this initial masculine trait of strength, the humanity (and thus the right to live) of the inmate is not recognized by the oppressors.

An inmate having a natural aptitude towards physical strength then is doubly likely to survive. Starvation was obviously a deliberate attempt by the SS to weaken and de-humanize certain inmates but not all. Judith Butler, in her analysis of gender ambiguity, writes, “Those bodily figures who do not fit into either gender fall outside the human, indeed, constitute the domain of the dehumanized and the abject against which

⁵³⁸ Davis 174

⁵³⁹ Forth and Taithe 5

⁵⁴⁰ Robert’s interpretation certainly has a basis within his own conception of these men as human. The SS officers may only see them as strong animals, such as workhorses, rather than strong humans. Nevertheless, in allowing these strong men more food, they are treated more humanely, and as such, more as humans, while other inmates are treated more like animals.

the human itself is constituted.”⁵⁴¹ The SS initially see the weakened prisoners as less human due to their lack of strength, and so they are mistreated to the point where they begin to lose physical gender markers. The SS officers weaken the prisoners through a systematic destruction of their bodies as well as their spirits, thus dehumanizing them further. Without physical strength, they have no value to the SS. With no value, there is little reason for the SS to sustain their lives through food. This starvation further dehumanizes them because their frail and fragile bodies are so far from recognizable as men. The intense labor and starvation they suffer lead their bodies to become abject, partially by seeming genderless.⁵⁴²

This way of viewing the prisoners as abject calls to mind Kristeva’s work on the concept of abjection. She demonstrates the view of women’s bodies as abject or as embodying abject qualities.⁵⁴³ There are ties in abjection to Butler’s notion of the stripped down, genderless body. Abjection implies violence and Kristeva links abjection to the concentration camps, writing that “l’abjection du crime nazi touche à son apogée lorsque la mort qui, de toute façon, me tue, se mêle à ce qui, dans mon univers vivant, est censé me sauver de la mort à l’enfance, à la science, entre autres [...]”⁵⁴⁴ Abjection is then within this in-between space, wedged between death and the possibility of life. This position describes the *Muselmann*, almost dead, but not quite. The *Muselmann* is dead, other than in the most clinical sense, as he still has a beating heart. He is alive, but

⁵⁴¹ Butler, *Gender Trouble* 151

⁵⁴² This is not to say that the Nazis treated these men who demonstrated strength well, but rather that, according to Robert, they were better nourished.

⁵⁴³ For more on abjection, women, and Kristeva’s analysis of Céline’s *Voyage au bout de la nuit*, see Chapter one.

⁵⁴⁴ Kristeva 12

whatever might have saved him can no longer do so. Through this abjection, the *Muselmann*, brushing just next to death, has no gender. He is neither dead, nor alive; he is neither man, nor woman; male, nor female. His situation strips him of life through the body, and for Butler, also removes all traces of gender, as all of the markers that indicate bodily gender waste away as life wastes away.

This *Muselmann*, so close to death and with no gender to speak of, is at the low end of the hierarchy, while the strong prisoner with a clear gender identity is at the higher end. The *Muselmann* is on the outside of the inside, but not totally outside of humanity; rather, he exists in the margins. One pointed criticism on Agamben's work comes from Jenny Edkins, a scholar of international politics, who notes that Agamben does not "take more widely into consideration other forms of being; his anthropogenic machine is confined in its operation to the man/animal distinction."⁵⁴⁵ Edkins is right to point out that Agamben does not allow any room between the two extremes of the one who lives in bare life, the *Muselmann*, and the one who lives a political life, as a fully realized

⁵⁴⁵ Jenny Edkins. "Whatever Politics." *Giorgio Agamben: Sovereignty and Life*. Ed. Matthew Calarco and Steven DeCaroli. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007. 70-91, 72. A notable critique of Agamben's work is Jacques Derrida, in his seminar, *La bête et le souverain*. This criticism relates indirectly to my usage of Agamben's work and therefore I will not fully engage with the criticism. My focus within Agamben's work is on how he articulates the notion of the *Muselmann*. Derrida largely criticizes Agamben's tendency to declare origins of concepts, including his own position. Derrida argues that Agamben positions himself in the role of the sovereign, as Derrida writes, "Celui qui se pose en souverain ou qui entend prendre le pouvoir en souverain dit ou sous-entend toujours: même si je ne suis pas le premier à le faire ou à le dire, je suis le premier ou le seul à connaître et à reconnaître qui *aura été* le premier." (Jacques Derrida. *Séminaire: La bête et le souverain, Volume I (2001-2002)*. Paris: Editions Galilée, 2008, 135. Author's emphasis). Derrida then expands this particular criticism to a critique of Agamben's work on biopolitical sovereignty. Sociologist Amy Swiffen, who specializes in legal sociology and sociological theory, writes that Derrida "argues that [Agamben's] desire to set internal thresholds to law is mirrored by an attempt to impart thresholds and origins to philosophy and history, and, in the process, to establish himself as a 'first' to see or do these things as well" (Amy Swiffen. "Derrida Contra Agamben: Sovereignty, Biopower, History." *Societies* 2 (2012): 345-356, 350.). In spite of this criticism, Agamben does provide a useful explanation and framework through which to discuss the figure of the *Muselmann*.

individual,⁵⁴⁶ as this extreme dichotomy oversimplifies the transition between man and animal. To my mind, there is space in between; this is where we find Antelme's insistence on masculinity. As loss of masculinity is the transition into the *Muselmann*, the possibilities of living in a gendered way allow for a whole spectrum of lives between Agamben's *zoe* and *bios*. Gender expression is thus critical to one's identity and humanity.

Both Robert's desire to flip the SS officers on their heads and the Nazi privileging of the strong inmates are methods of gender expression which may be understood through the hierarchy in Connell's theorization of "hegemonic masculinity." In a more recent overview of hegemonic masculinity in a work co-authored with James Messerschmidt, also a sociologist specializing in masculinities studies, Connell and his collaborator note that Connell had initially used the term to account for intersectionalities within masculinity studies, which he understands as the varying identity factors that, when combined, dictate where an individual stands in society.⁵⁴⁷ I understand hegemonic masculinity to mean that to have biologically male sex characteristics is not enough for society to consider an individual fully a "man," and so a structural hierarchy is necessary. Within the concentration camps, the SS officers fill the top position. There is a hierarchy in the camp, and from the SS treatment of certain inmates, it is clear that this hierarchy strongly relates to the gender politics that exist *within* masculinity. In his desire to flip

⁵⁴⁶ For Agamben, there are two forms of life, *bios* and *zoe*, where *zoe* is the natural life, and *bios* is the natural life accompanied by political life. In Agamben's work, this natural life, a life that does not thrive, is the life of the *Muselmänn*, who, in his bare life, "remains included in politics in the form of the exception, that is, as something that is included solely through an exclusion" (Giorgio Agamben. *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998, 11.).

⁵⁴⁷ R.W. Connell. and James W. Messerschmidt. "Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept." *Gender and Society* 19.6 (2005): 829-859, 830.

the officer, Robert is trying to place himself at the top of this hierarchy, and at the very least, avoid being on the bottom. The conflation of the definition of the terms *man* and *human* aids in this process and engages with the established hierarchy of the camp, where the SS officers are at the top, followed by the strong inmates, then most other prisoners, with the *Muselmann* at the very bottom.

To clarify the expression “hegemonic masculinity,” Connell and Messerschmidt point to the preponderance of hegemonic masculinities. This type of masculinity fits well with the analysis of the SS officer as occupying this dominant masculine position.

Connell explains,

Hegemonic masculinity was not assumed to be normal in the statistical sense; only a minority of men might enact it. But it was certainly normative. It embodied the currently most honored way of being a man, it required all other men to position themselves in relation to it, and it ideologically legitimated the global subordination of women to men.⁵⁴⁸

While we cannot classify the fascist policies enacted by the Nazi party as “statistically normal,” they are in line with other normative structures of gender domination. As I referenced in Chapter one, Connell himself points to fascism as a prime example of hegemonic masculinity through its assertion of male authority. Even though Connell’s statement here has largely to do with masculine domination over the feminine, it is relevant to interpret these terms within the context of the concentration camp, especially

⁵⁴⁸ Connell and Messerschmidt 832

given Robert's concern with maintaining a masculinity and a humanity within the fight for survival. Fascism promotes a homogenous community, articulated as the "Aryan race." The Nazis established a hierarchy of humanity through the prioritization of the "Aryan race," and this privileging of certain bodies over others, as Robert's narrative reveals, is enacted on all inmates, not only the Jewish prisoners.

The Nazis operate in a way that emphasizes, reproduces, and reinforces this hierarchy within the status of the inmates. The words of Robert, entrenched in a certain understanding of masculinity that privileges strength, manifest this hierarchy. Since the inmates are also fighting to survive while maintaining their humanity, they come to see masculinity and humanity in similar terms. According to the Nazi ideal, if one is "masculine," one is human; if one is human, one lives. Robert's investment in masculinity is precisely his humanity, as in the camps one does not exist without the other. Yet by fighting to survive while not fitting into the masculine code but simultaneously seeing survival as dependent on masculinity, Robert rejects the established masculine code. If survival is dependent on masculinity, but Robert does not fit into the Nazi mold of masculinity, yet still fights for survival, then he rejects their version of masculinity for his own, one that will still ensure his survival. To be sure, he focuses entirely on masculinity as humanity, yet what masculinity means to him is not necessarily what it means to his oppressors. The stakes of masculinity for Robert and his fellow inmates are high; nothing else could possibly matter more than the fight for life. The importance of survival through masculinity serves then to explain the moments in the text where Robert criticizes other prisoners based on gender expectations.

One particular moment that stands out is an interaction between Robert and Bortlick, a German prisoner in a position of authority. Bortlick's authority demonstrates the establishment of an official hierarchy in the camps even among the prisoners. Robert's description of Bortlick suggests that there is something relating to masculinity at stake within the camp. Bortlick has a higher status than many others, and gets more food, access to basic hygiene, and comfortable sleeping conditions. In the informal hierarchy, the one that Robert emphasizes based on masculine norms, Bortlick is on the powerless end. Robert describes Bortlick:

Ses mains étaient roses, ses cheveux bruns, partagés par une raie nette, luisaient; il était rasé, il avait une veste, un pull-over, une chemise. Tout cela était propre. Ses yeux ont glissé sur mon cou; [...]. J'avais l'impression que je me trouvais à côté d'un homme vierge, d'une sorte de bambin géant. Cette peau rose était répugnante. J'éprouvais à peu près le dégoût que peut éprouver une femme devant un homme vierge. Je ne sentais plus les poux. Cette peau intacte qui n'avait pas froid, cette peau rose et bien nourrie qui allait se coller le soir sur une peau de femme, cette peau était horrible; elle ne savait rien.⁵⁴⁹

The reference to Bortlick as an *homme vierge* is what most profoundly signals that Robert sees this figure as unmasculine. In contrast to the strong, masculine well-fed prisoners, Bortlick's privilege makes him soft, and as such, weak. Robert's description is visceral, giving the reader the impression of a slimy, pink, pathetic man-child fresh from the

⁵⁴⁹ Antelme 125-26

womb. To be sure, there is an element of jealousy in this description—Bortlick will spend the night with a woman because of his privileged position while Robert will spend the night alone. Yet from this description, Bortlick's privilege and access to basic human requirements, in Robert's eyes, makes him less of a man.

Bortlick's access to privilege is the reverse from how the Nazis operate, since as we have seen those who are more masculine, i.e. stronger, receive better treatment. Although the Nazis value a certain kind of masculinity from the inmates, Bortlick managed to gain authority without it. In acting in a place of authority, Bortlick is, in a very simple way, collaborating with the Nazis, which would lessen both his masculinity and his humanity in the eyes of Robert, a political prisoner. To receive good treatment from the Nazis, according to Robert, is to be less of a man.

Antelme's reduction of Bortlick's person continues as he describes Bortlick as "impuissant" in his leadership role,⁵⁵⁰ which has a double meaning in French of both "powerless" and "impotent." This reference to sexual prowess is most certainly a call to masculinity, and in this case, to Bortlick's failed masculinity in the eyes of Antelme. Antelme's use of the term here also reveals that masculinity is at stake for him, even though he is in the most desperate situation of basic human need. In describing this man in the terms he uses, employing such a term as "impuissant," Robert is reinforcing a certain understanding of masculinity. Ken Plummer, social psychologist and sociologist specializing in sexuality and queer studies, writes that in a phallogocentric society, "not only is the penis the source of the male's erotic pleasures [...] but it is also an

⁵⁵⁰ Antelme 126

enormously *potent* symbol. Engorged and erect, it is a sign of male power, assertion, and achievement [...]. But flaccid, it is also a sign.”⁵⁵¹ The impotence that Robert sees in Bortlick refers to his weakness. Robert uses Bortlick’s lack of masculinity to position himself hierarchically above Bortlick. Even though officially Bortlick is above Robert, Robert maintains more of his humanity, and therefore feels that he is above Bortlick.

While the concept of the “human” is how Robert initially negotiates his role in the concentration camp, the language he uses serves to extend that role to a masculine one, putting a premium on a code of culturally gendered behavior. Ultimately, he bases his role, and the way in which he compares himself to others in the camp, both the officers and the other prisoners, on a set of male expectations. His survival, he acknowledges, is dependent on preserving his humanity—thus he subscribes to his own rules of masculinity, which strengthen his desire to flip the SS officer. Demonstrating masculinity links itself within the Nazi rhetoric to the proper expression of humanity. In the male camps, masculinity *is* humanity.

Conclusion

These three narratives reveal the ways in which military hierarchy makes its way into non-military and non-war settings. Within Occupied Paris, the Groult sisters reveal their own investment in a military-style hierarchy by privileging the American soldiers because of their physically masculine appearance and their status as victors and saviors of

⁵⁵¹ Ken Plummer. "Male Sexualities." *Handbook of Studies on Men and Masculinities*. Ed. Michael S. Kimmel, Jeff Hearn and R.W. Connell. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2005. 178-195, 179. Author’s emphasis

the French nation. My analysis of Sembène's film mainly centers on the ways in which hierarchy influences interactions just outside of the military transit camp, in a colonized city. To be sure, the colonial aspect of the story combines with the military influence to create and sustain hierarchies within that environment. Others initially treat Sergeant-Chef Diatta as privileged when he pretends to be African-American, and they strip him of that privilege once he reveals his identity. The colonial hierarchy is influenced by race, which would not necessarily be as much of an issue within an all-white French military. This particular hierarchy is revealed by initial racial privilege, which is overturned by revelations of nationality. We see that race is then not the only factor in colonial hierarchies, but national privilege serves as a significant factor above race. Though national identity is important to how one sees oneself, the way in which others interpret Diatta's identity through his origins reveals the privilege that some nations and their citizens have over others.

Finally, we see how the military hierarchy influences the highly militarized setting of the concentration camp. Robert discusses the ways in which stronger, more masculine inmates get better treatment while mentally positioning himself above the feminized prisoner with privilege. While this character rejects the institution that has imprisoned him in this militarized setting, he still sees himself within its hierarchical structure, rejecting the individual he sees as beneath him. Thus, hierarchy transitions from the military to the outside world, even when that outside world appears to lack a strong connection to the rigid structure of the military, as is the case with the world of the Groult sisters most obviously, but also in the non-combatant spaces of the concentration

camp and the colonial city. These characters are heavily influence by the notion of hierarchy, whether by the judgment they place on others or by the judgment that is placed upon them. Therefore, we see that hierarchies, heavily influenced by the structures of power, permeate society in many different ways.

Conclusion: Institutional vs. Individual, and Reflections on Literary Potential

The corpus of literature and film in my study offers underground versions of masculinities that exist during the high stakes time of war. My analysis of these works brings out the different interpretations, interactions, acceptances and rejections of martial masculinity in various war settings. While each novel or film is unique in its way of relating to the code of martial masculinity and in re-thinking the heroic warrior myth, my approach to these works provides a way of seeing the broader evolution and adaptation of individuals and their conception of masculinity through the same creative works that question these myths. Through an analysis of masculinities within the varying contexts of war, we see the ways in which such gender requirements function on an institutional and individual level. In emphasizing negotiations with masculinity, we are able to focus on particular gendered aspects of the former romanticization of war and the subsequent entrance into the violent reality of World War I's destruction.

The shift between the romanticization and the reality of war speaks to a transition between the warrior image and the image of the soldier. This literature and these films reveal that where the warrior is aligned with a heroic vision of martial masculinity, the soldier ultimately emerges as a figure far more deeply aligned with alternative modes of masculinity. These creative works, and this is why literature is useful in analyzing these terms that are so deeply ingrained with definitions that are theoretically understood yet not always fully articulated, show the transition from warrior ideal to soldierly reality. The reality and its focus on survival rather than on heroism, at least in the mostly

fictionalized terms of these novels and films, speaks to total destruction of these newer wars.

The destruction of war, along with the rapid defeat of the French in World War II, brings out varying interpretations of the code of male behavior, some from the soldiers in the trenches, some from observers to the violence that these men suffer. For the most part, where we see attempts at enacting hegemonic masculinity, it tends to be corrupted or corrupting for the men who embody it and for those around them, like Mireau and the men he accuses of cowardice (*Paths of Glory*) and Bardamu (*Voyage au bout de la nuit*) and his love interests, specifically Lola. Alternatively, this particular form of militarized masculinity does function well for the teenage girls during the Occupation in *Journal à quatre mains*. They fully expect and accept a powerful version of military masculinity—to them it is as essential as food. Yet the physical separation between them and this masculinity—they are independent from the men—helps them understand their priorities. Most importantly, though, these teenagers do not ultimately take these men to be serious potential partners, and they reject these martially masculine men in favor of themselves and their own potential for further growth.

We also see alternatives to martial masculinity in the trenches, where we might most expect soldiers to morph into powered war machines in an attempt to save their own lives. Instead, my analysis draws out the benefit of alternative masculinities in the trenches where compassion has value over ruthlessness, as it does for Cendrars' characters, and where cynicism shows the men that they need to watch out for themselves, since the State does not necessarily care about their individual survival, as in

Barbusse's novel. Through these rejections, re-adaptations, and the high potential for corruption, we see the dangers and pitfalls of high expectations of military masculinity alongside the benefits of alternative versions.

The imposition of gender expectations through the requirements of martial masculinity to fit an image of the warrior can have deadly consequences. The figure of the hero highlights these consequences, as he is less likely to survive war as a result of his heroic actions. While the enactment or lack thereof of martially masculine behavior has consequences for the individual, these requirements originate from a communal space. These requirements existing in a communal space rather than a private one emphasize Butler's argument for the necessity of performing one's gender—gender is done for the benefit of the public. The narratives in my study reveal that eschewing certain performative behavioral modes aids the individual in functioning well in his or her community, while conforming can be risky. The notion of conformity as a risk goes against Butler's argument that gender is done for others as it is the outside that requires conformity—and I agree with her that often it is risky to not conform to gender stereotypes. However, we see from these novels and films that war seems to change what is good for the survival of the individual.

My analysis reveals then, that conforming to gender expectations can be dangerous. When compared with an atmosphere where war is not emphasized, it is surprising to see this danger in conformity located in war settings. Outside of war, not conforming is usually what is lethal, as to this day, gender-queer individuals and transpeople, who do not conform to gender expectations based on biological sex, face

intense violence from others and suffer higher suicide rates than the general population. Thus in contrasting civilian modes of gendered being with non-civilian modes of gendered being, we see an opposition. To prevent physical violence from outside sources, the civilian must conform while the soldier must not. In spite of this opposition, these two groups, soldiers and gender non-conforming civilians, have similar risk factors outside of war. Like gender non-conforming individuals, veterans also have high suicide rates. While I am not suggesting that these lived experiences are the same in any way, they do have some significant commonalities that are worth exploring, specifically their proximity to violence and the importance of gender stereotypes within these experiences. In other words, both conforming and not conforming to biologically determined gender expectations can be deadly, depending on the circumstances.

The novels and films in my study show how the rigid application of masculinity and a strict adherence to the institutional code of behavior can interfere with acting in ethical ways. Foucault, in his examination of morality and ethics, interprets the development of these codes of behavior. He writes, “il arrive que ces règles et valeurs soient très explicitement formulées en une doctrine cohérente et en un enseignement explicite.”⁵⁵² Martial masculinity, in its most rigid usage, is a set of values set forth in this regulated manner. Through this study, we have seen the ways in which education and access to citizenship have dictated a specific structure of martial masculinity within the French institutional system, thereby creating an explicit doctrine of behavior for the

⁵⁵² Foucault, *Histoire 2* 32

French citizen—one which we have seen as not necessarily very productive for any given person.

However, Foucault goes further and suggests the ways in which alternative means of shaping ethics can produce balance within behavioral codes. He continues,

Mais il arrive aussi qu'elles soient transmises de façon diffuse et que, loin de former un ensemble systématique, elles constituent un jeu complexe d'éléments qui se compensent, se corrigent, s'annulent sur certains points, permettant ainsi compromis ou échappatoires. Sous ces réserves, on peut appeler 'code moral' cet ensemble prescriptif.⁵⁵³

Codes of martial masculinity can originate from formal systems, yet outside of its institutional imposition, what the war literature and films show us is that an alternative version of the institutional code of ethics is also generated through informal channels, creating, through the compromises to which Foucault refers, a more ethical way of living. Fiction especially helps to re-create, in a more understandable way, these alternate versions of modes of being in these extreme conditions. Storytelling serves to provide a potentially relatable way of describing and testifying to the way people existed in and around war. Although the ways in which individuals and societies determine what it means “to be a man” can be inflexible within specific situations, these novels and films reveal that a more realistic code, based on the needs of individuals, can informally emerge. Individuals are thus able to adapt their perception of “what it means to be a man” depending on the situation (whether, for the purposes of my study in the trenches,

⁵⁵³ Foucault, *Histoire 2*, 32

war hospitals, Occupied Paris, concentration camps, or during war's aftermath), revealing that masculinity is not an absolute measure. When interpreted as absolute, we see its failures, as in the case of Mireau. When flexibility within its interpretation is present, as in Cendrars, we see the potential for a better outcome.

The institutions of power that dictate codes of gender behavior thus do so in their own interest, revealing the limitations of their ways of determining what it means to be a man. In examining how masculinity functions in war literature, I show that its perversion reveals its potential for danger. Again, the contrast between Mireau and Cendrars' narrator does well to articulate oppositional interpretations of masculinity in war. Mireau, and Bardamu in Céline's novel, expose the potential dangers of martial masculinity when taken too far—theirs was a masculinity that lacked the necessary balance of contradictory behaviors. They were not in control of their masculinity, but rather, it controlled them. The masculinity that these characters performed was fully aggressive, and they did not temper this aggression with the necessary compassion. Conversely, Cendrars' narrator and the unit in Barbusse's text show individuals and smaller groups who reject the hierarchical version of martial masculinity and do not suffer negative consequences for that decision. Rather, they take the military rhetoric of camaraderie and use that as their basis of action instead of using martial masculinity as a code of behavior. While the balance of compassion and camaraderie fits within a paradigm of martial masculinity, given the contradictory requirements of this behavioral

code that Aaron Belkin lays out,⁵⁵⁴ this second group of men enacts alternatives to martial masculinity by emphasizing compassion and camaraderie over their opposites, opposites which have stronger influence over martially masculine behavior expectations. Compassion and camaraderie provide balance, but because they tend to reveal vulnerabilities, do not dictate primary behaviors of masculinity.

The rejection of martial masculinity, especially in Barbusse's novel, complements the nursing novels that highlight male vulnerability. The result of what Barbusse's characters see as inevitable—death or injury—is then taken up in the nursing novels through the stories of injured soldiers. Though the narrators of these novels do not necessarily articulate a rejection of war in a clear and decisive way, the depictions in these novels of injured soldiers draw attention to the true vulnerability of military, and therefore likely, injured masculinity. Ultimately, a rigidly defined form of martial masculinity, particularly through its association with bravery, makes its adherents vulnerable.

These writers and filmmakers are also doing the task of testimony. While they bear witness to the events of and surrounding war, they also, unexpectedly, speak to gender expectations and shifts and reveal the vulnerabilities of a behavioral mode that is supposed to be the most powerful. In creating narratives about the failures and changes in martial masculinity, they bear witness to its weakness. They show the realities of the structures of power, revealing that romanticized narratives of war help the nation recruit citizens to fight, thus, the State has a high stake in maintaining these types of images.

⁵⁵⁴ See Chapter three for more on Belkin's explanation of contradictory requirements of martial masculinity.

However, these works also reveal that the romantic war story does a great disservice to the citizens who believe this narrative of triumph in war. When faced with war, soldiers, at least in the case of the protagonists in the trench narratives I study, find that the horrors outweigh the triumphs. The potential price for the individual soldier, death, is far from the price that the State pays when an individual soldier dies. These stories call attention to those flaws.

Given the vulnerability of martial masculinity, it is not surprising to see in these texts and films that some of the characters reformulate gender expectations to fit their world or even serve their individual needs. These alternatives often serve to temper the soldier's potential for vulnerability. The broader culturally constructed version of masculinity that adheres to the warrior myth, while supposedly fierce and strong, puts its enactors in danger, rendering them more vulnerable than alternative versions might. However, while alternatives serve potentially to lessen vulnerability, it cannot be eliminated. Before the war, the soldier has little choice in his fate. By wanting the citizen to be like the soldier, the State dictates that the citizen is, in Althusser's words, always-already a soldier,⁵⁵⁵ and therefore, always-already vulnerable because of the soldier's unavoidable vulnerability. This always-already vulnerable nature of the soldier is the weakness of the ideology of martial masculinity. It puts those who are supposed to seem the strongest in the most physically and mentally damaging positions, which means

⁵⁵⁵ In a citizen being always-already a soldier, we can trace the shift in the dangers of gender non-conformity to the dangers of gender conformity. If a citizen always must be a soldier, then outside of war, where he is fully visible, he must conform to martial masculinity or face unknown risk. Once he becomes a soldier in the trenches, the chaos and danger of war make non-conformity less visible, and conformity more dangerous.

that the myth of the warrior is always-already destroyed because its demands include the warrior's own death. There is a distinction between types of masculinity and the vulnerability that each type produces. Specifically, the pre-war soldier is vulnerable to war, as being called out as a citizen-soldier, he is almost guaranteed injury, according to these novels and films. Thus, the soldier immediately before war is just as theoretically vulnerable as the soldier of the trenches is. Once injury occurs, whether physical or mental, he is newly vulnerable. He becomes, as we see in the nursing novels, a child-like figure in his need for care and attention. Thus while there are different levels of vulnerability, the soldiers' susceptibility to injury and death is always quite high because as individuals, they lack institutional power.

Institutions of power render colonial soldiers doubly exposed. They, like all soldiers, are inherently vulnerable, and this vulnerability has compounded their lack of power vis-à-vis the French. In the novels I have examined that engage with colonial soldiers as part of their narratives (Barbusse's *Le feu* and both nursing novels), we only see these colonial soldiers depicted through the interpretation of the French. However, these French narrators do seem to have a notion of the double vulnerability of these men. The nurses, especially, reference the soldiers' colonial status as making their injuries more difficult due to their distance from home, while Barbusse's characters reference the colonial soldiers' proximity to the front lines and the danger that position guarantees. Though the nurses and soldiers do not reveal a comprehension of the colonial oppression that these men suffer, they do see them as extra vulnerable for these other reasons.

Nevertheless, there is no discussion of the vulnerability that stems from fighting a war for another, nor is there explicit mention of their colonized status.

This source of vulnerability is more evident in Sembène's *Camp de Thiaroye*, which underlines racial and national inequalities exacerbated by colonialism. This film offers the perspective of the colonized. The character Pays, especially given the meaning of his name—"country"—best reflects this dual vulnerability. He is under the rule of the French colonizer as a soldier while simultaneously living in a Nazi concentration camp as a POW. He thus dually suffers oppression, as his status as a POW only occurs as a result of his colonial status. That is, had the French not colonized his land, he may not have been in the position of the POW. This dual vulnerability has such power over him that he cannot tell the difference between French and Nazi oppression. In both situations, he is a prisoner, confined to a space by barbed wire and he suffers poor living conditions.⁵⁵⁶ The film not only makes racism visible through the spaces that certain individuals are allowed to inhabit while others are not, but also accentuates the national prejudices and segregations that occur as a result of colonialism. Diatta's rejection from the brothel is a concrete way of demonstrating that the colonial individual is only allowed in certain spaces that are highly regulated by the French, and while occupying the spaces where they are allowed, their rights are taken away.

Just as characters exist within a hierarchy based on their nationality in Sembène's film, so do characters in the Groult sisters' novel. The main characters judge others

⁵⁵⁶ While Sembène's narrative invites a comparison between the actions of the Nazis and those of the French colonialists, I am by no means equating the concentration camps and the Nazis to the military transit camps and the French. I only point to similarities in the situation to underline the understandable confusion for the character.

based on their national origin and the success of that nation. The girls' sexual attraction serves to articulate their personal masculine hierarchy, with the French at the bottom as the losers, then the Germans right above. Although one of the teens admits to finding the Germans attractive, their status as enemy trumps their heightened masculinity. The entrance of the victorious Americans allows the teens a means to embrace both patriotism and the figure of the masculine war hero, showing the importance of nationality and national victory within a masculine hierarchy.

In this dissertation on war and masculinity, female voices are limited. This is not because women have nothing to say on this subject, or even that women have not contributed to works on war. Rather, as I articulated in Chapter two, women were limited in what they were allowed to convey to get their writings on war published in the early 20th-Century.⁵⁵⁷ However, the ways in which women write about war have the possibility of shifting, at least within American literature. This potential shift could occur due to the new policy of allowing women in combat roles in the United States military, along with the expanded roles and rights women have in contemporary society.

While women are already allowed in combat in France, a shift in female war writing does not appear to have yet occurred there. There are a few potential reasons for this. Only 1.7% of the combat forces in France are female, partially because women are not allowed to serve on submarines or in the anti-riot gendarmerie, according to an article by Anna Mulrine, a journalist specializing in war and defense.⁵⁵⁸ The lack of combat

⁵⁵⁷ To reinforce this point, the Groult sisters did not publish their novel until well after World War II had ended.

⁵⁵⁸ Anna Mulrine. "8 Other Nations That Send Women to Combat." *National Geographic News* 25 January 2013. 24 April 2014.

memoirs by French female veterans coming out of the Afghanistan conflicts does not necessarily suggest that women in the United States will not write on the subject, given that men in France have written less than American men on these wars as well. The small number of recent war memoirs and creative works related to war from France might be simply due to the smaller number of troops from France involved in the conflict, as well as the more limited amount of time that France was engaged in that conflict.⁵⁵⁹

With this potential for change in war writing, we can still ask the same question: what is the figure of the masculine war hero today? What does contemporary literature say about the expectations placed on the soldier? Even though there are women in combat and in spite of the shift in the warrior myth, I predict there will still be a masculinization of the figure of the war hero in contemporary war literature and in the cultural rhetoric. Cara Hoffman, an American author and journalist who recently published a novel about a female veteran called *Be Safe I Love You*, laments in an opinion piece entitled “The Things She Carried,” that female veterans’ stories simply are not told in our popular culture.⁵⁶⁰ In an article, “Home Fries: How soldiers write their wars,” by George Packer, an American journalist known for his reporting on foreign policy, Packer suggests that this lack is about to change. He believes that we are coming into a new phase in war literature from the United States, where female veterans share

⁵⁵⁹ I have found very few memoirs and novels on the conflict in Afghanistan coming out of France overall. One title in particular is by Sergeant Christophe Tran Van Can entitled *Journal d'un soldat français en Afghanistan*, published in 2011 (Paris: Plon, 2011.). Lieutenant Charline Redin also wrote on her experience in the French Air Force in her memoir, *Afghanistan, regards d'aviateurs* (Paris: SIRPA Air, 2011.).

⁵⁶⁰ Cara Hoffman. "The Things She Carried." *The New York Times* 1 April 2014: A23.

their stories in significantly higher numbers, given their new role in combat. As such, we will not only have a male perspective on war.⁵⁶¹

If this shift were to occur, what will war novels look like and how will masculinity operate, if at all, in these new female war novels? Given what we saw in the narratives of World War I and II, with the failures of martial masculinity and its subsequent alternatives, how will a larger female literary presence influence the representation of masculinity and war? Hoffman theorizes on this question and the potential contribution of female veterans:

Society may come to understand war differently if people could see it through the eyes of women who've experienced both giving birth and taking life. People might learn something new about aggression and violence if we read not just about those fighting the enemy but about those who must also fight off assault from the soldiers they serve beside or report to.⁵⁶²

Comparable (though in no means the same) to the colonial soldier, the contemporary female soldier is doubly vulnerable. She exists in a similar space as the Groult sisters who acknowledge their innate vulnerability during the Nazi Occupation as being linked to the high likelihood of rape. As Belkin explains, the use of rape in war does not only serve to demonstrate dominance over the enemy, but “male soldiers have raped female soldiers as a testament to the armed forces as a bastion of male power.”⁵⁶³ Once again,

⁵⁶¹ George Packer. "Home Fries: How soldiers write their wars." *The New Yorker* 7 April 2014.

⁵⁶² Hoffman

⁵⁶³ Belkin 85

we see that what is feminine is a threat to the masculine. This vulnerability to rape compounds the vulnerability these women possess as soldiers.

Through literature and film, these women can offer new perspectives on the masculinity of war and on the camaraderie in the trenches, challenging reigning representations of the military, a social group that up to this point has been entirely male-dominated. In writing of their experience, these female veterans would serve as fresh witnesses not only to the experience of war itself, but also to the uses and abuses of martial masculinity, as well as alternative masculinities, within military ranks. Using literature or film as a means to articulate their lived experiences would do feminist work as well, providing women a means to speak out from a male dominated institution into a national audience, of which certain segments would want to hear women's voices. Going to war is not traditionally within the acceptable range of women's roles, and the same is true for speaking out.⁵⁶⁴ By creating literature on this subject, these women would be breaking two barriers of their sex. Women's war literature and film could have particular significance within the broad genre of war literature for this breaking of barriers.

Culturally speaking, women traditionally are not allowed to engage in martially masculine behaviors. Yet by enlisting in the military, they take on a role that requires these behaviors. By going against the cultural expectations of feminine roles, they threaten the exclusivity of male power.⁵⁶⁵ Their testimony to these gender requirements

⁵⁶⁴ I refer to only "certain segments" of the population who would want to hear women's voices precisely because women are often discouraged, or even threatened, when speaking in the public sphere. This potential threat only elevates the importance of literature from the female perspective on what is typically a masculine issue.

⁵⁶⁵ This is not to say that a female (or male) soldier cannot be feminine.

and restrictions could serve a larger purpose in articulating the problems of patriarchy to a broader audience. There is potential for scholarship on power, violence, and gender, specifically masculinity, in literature by these women, especially if they are able to write in a more critical way than what we find in previous 20th-Century female war novels. Their interpretation of the vulnerabilities and requirements of combat would provide interesting insight into the enactment of different types of masculinities.

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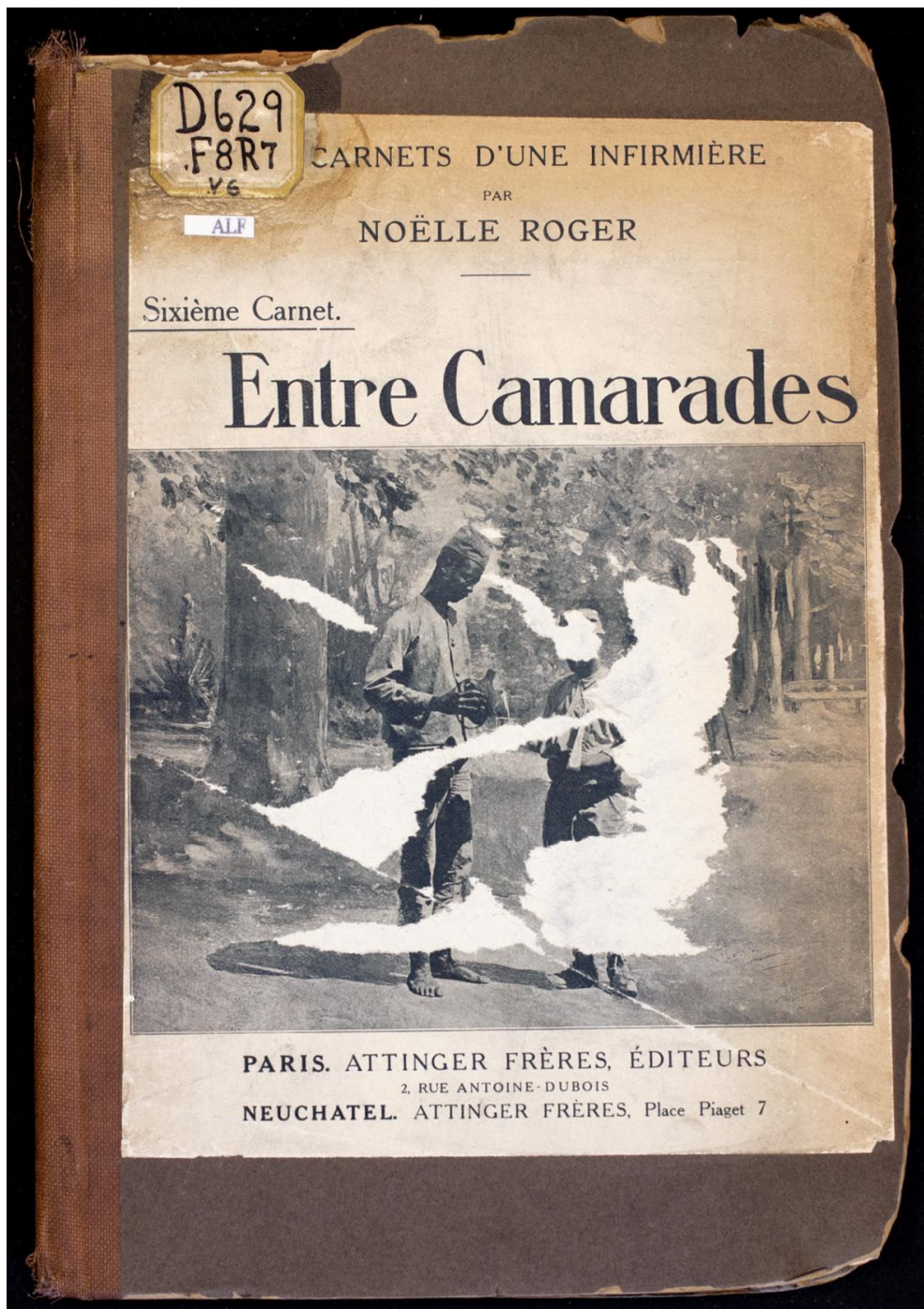
Appendix

A. A sign encouraging women to help with the war effort at home. Specifically, the call to duty towards the bottom, that the women “Remplacez sur le champ de travail ceux qui sont sur les champs de bataille.”⁵⁶⁶ The French government is asking the French women to replace men in their roles while they are away fighting the war



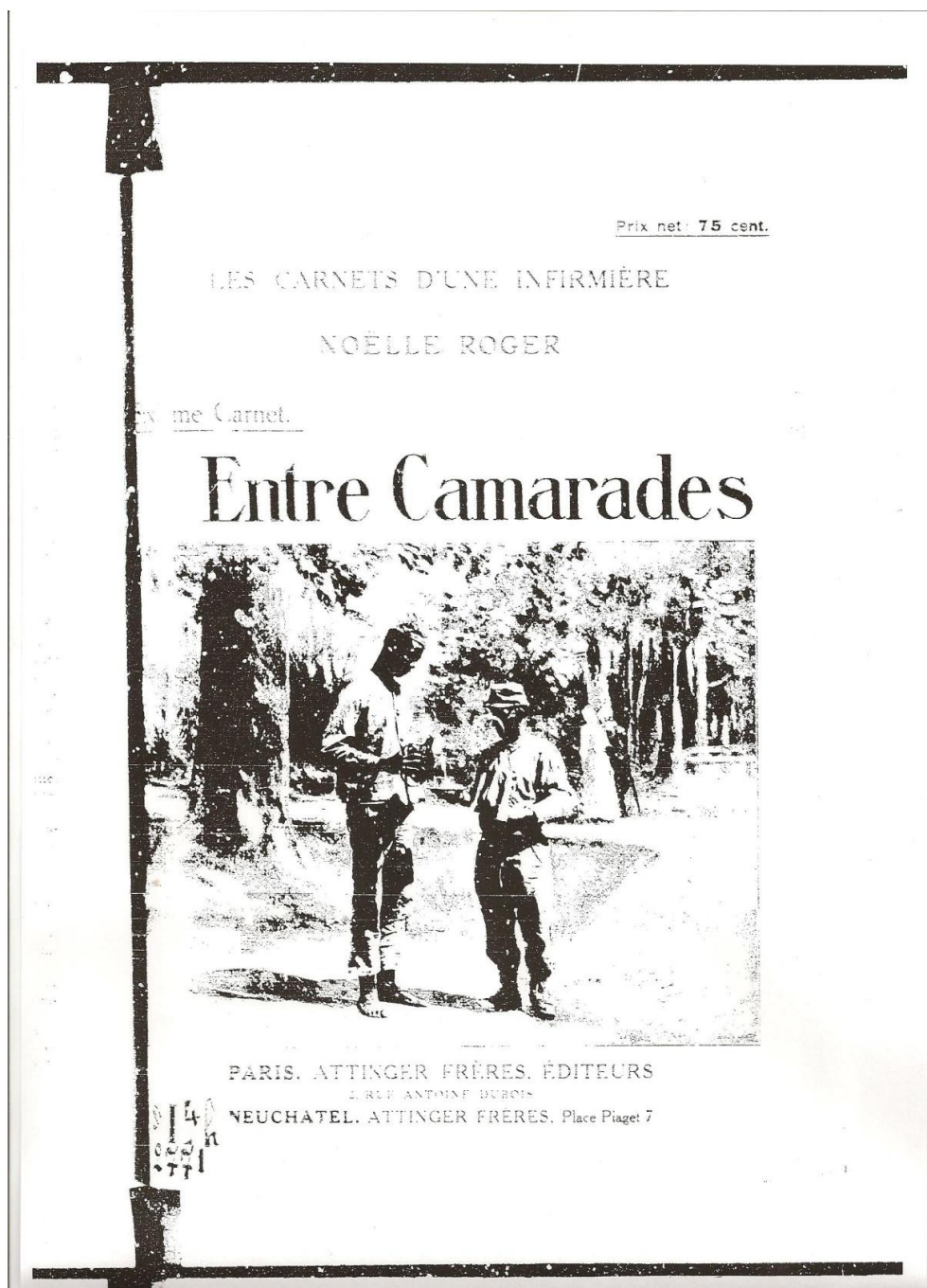
⁵⁶⁶ Gatard and Mercier-Bernadet 10

B. Cover of Volume Six (*Entre Camarades*) of Noëlle Roger's *Les carnets d'une infirmière*.⁵⁶⁷



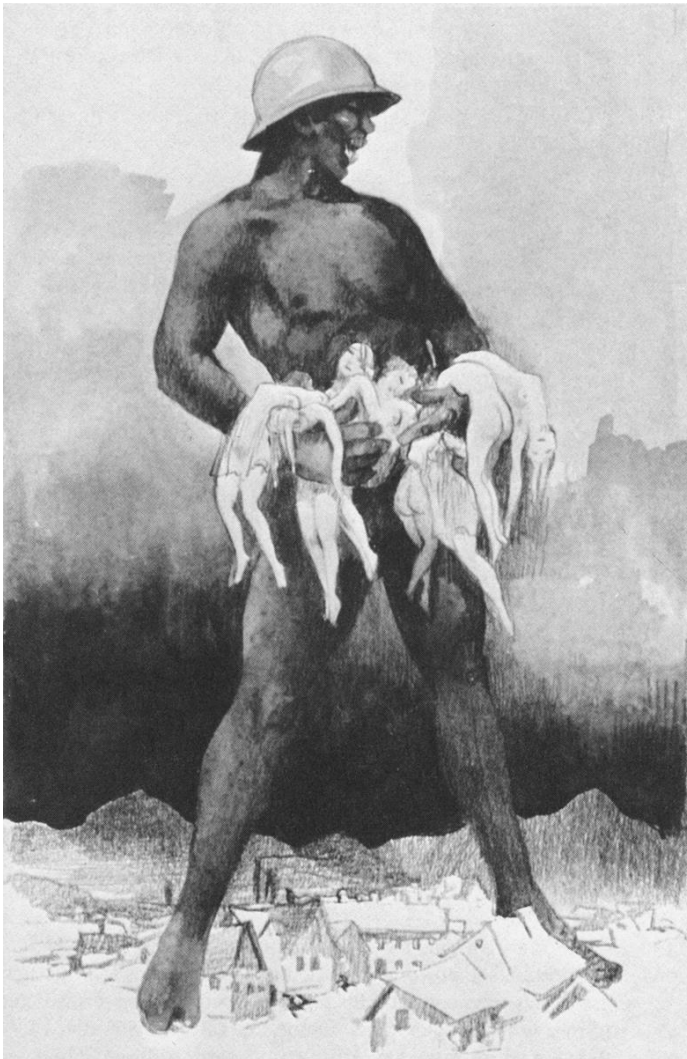
⁵⁶⁷ Roger, 6 cover

C. This is the black and white, but undamaged version of the cover of Volume Six (*Entre Camarades*) of Noëlle Roger's *Les carnets d'une infirmière*.⁵⁶⁸



⁵⁶⁸ Roger, 6 cover

D. From Klaus Theweleit's *Male Fantasies*, a poster illustrates the sentiment around French Black soldiers in Germany. The larger-than-life image of the soldier, holding unconscious women in his arms, lording over a small village, shows how threatening these men seemed to Europeans. This image portrays these Black soldiers as specifically threatening to European women, and more generally threatening to the small village.⁵⁶⁹



⁵⁶⁹ Theweleit 94

E. This image as Dax shows a heroic, yet crouched and preservational stance on the cover of a 2010 edition of the novel by Humphrey Cole upon which the film was based.

The same image was used for the film poster.⁵⁷⁰



⁵⁷⁰ Cobb, Humphrey. *Paths of Glory*. New York: Penguin Books, 2010.

F. "Wanted... More Men Like Mike!" A U.S. Army and Air Force recruitment advertisement from 1950.⁵⁷¹ Note the fresh faces, and the ways in which these drawings provide a visual interpretation of the Groult sisters' descriptions of the American soldiers.

**Wanted...
More Men Like
Mike!**

Men who want to go places,
and have plenty of the stuff it
takes to get there!

Mike could be any one of
a thousand typical young
American men who are going
places in today's Army.
We could be you!

Mike studied, worked, watched his chance. Finished
his first "batch" as a Sergeant. Doing better he went
home and married his pretty high school sweetheart.

Now, only four years after enlisting, Mike is a Sergeant
First Class, with no second career ahead. He would
trade places, or future opportunity, with anybody.

The young man of today who wants to get ahead
can continue his education and start building a
career at the same time, in the new U. S. Army.
More than 200 courses of specialized training for
many different career fields are taught in the
various Army schools. Each man's abilities are
charted, to place him where he should develop
rapidly. He can work on the frontiers of military
science with career-minded young men like him-
self, and serve his country with true professional
pride. Today's U. S. Army is providing career
opportunities for America's finest young men.

U. S. ARMY

VISIT YOUR NEAREST U. S. ARMY AND U. S. AIR FORCE RECRUITING STATION

RECRUITING
U. S. ARMY U. S. AIR FORCE

⁵⁷¹ *Wanted... More Men Like Mike!* n.d. University of Minnesota. 12 December 2013.
<https://dcl.umn.edu/search/show_details?search_string=army%20recruitment&per_page=60&&page=1>.

G. This image is of the character Pays in *Camp de Thiaroye*, played by Sijiri Bakaba.⁵⁷²



H. This is an image of the character Diatta from *Camp de Thiaroye*, played by Ibrahima Sane. This still is from right before Diatta goes into the brothel.⁵⁷³



⁵⁷² Sembène

⁵⁷³ Sembène