

RE-MANTLING THE FACE: THE FACIAL POLITICS OF WWI-ERA PORTRAIT MASKS

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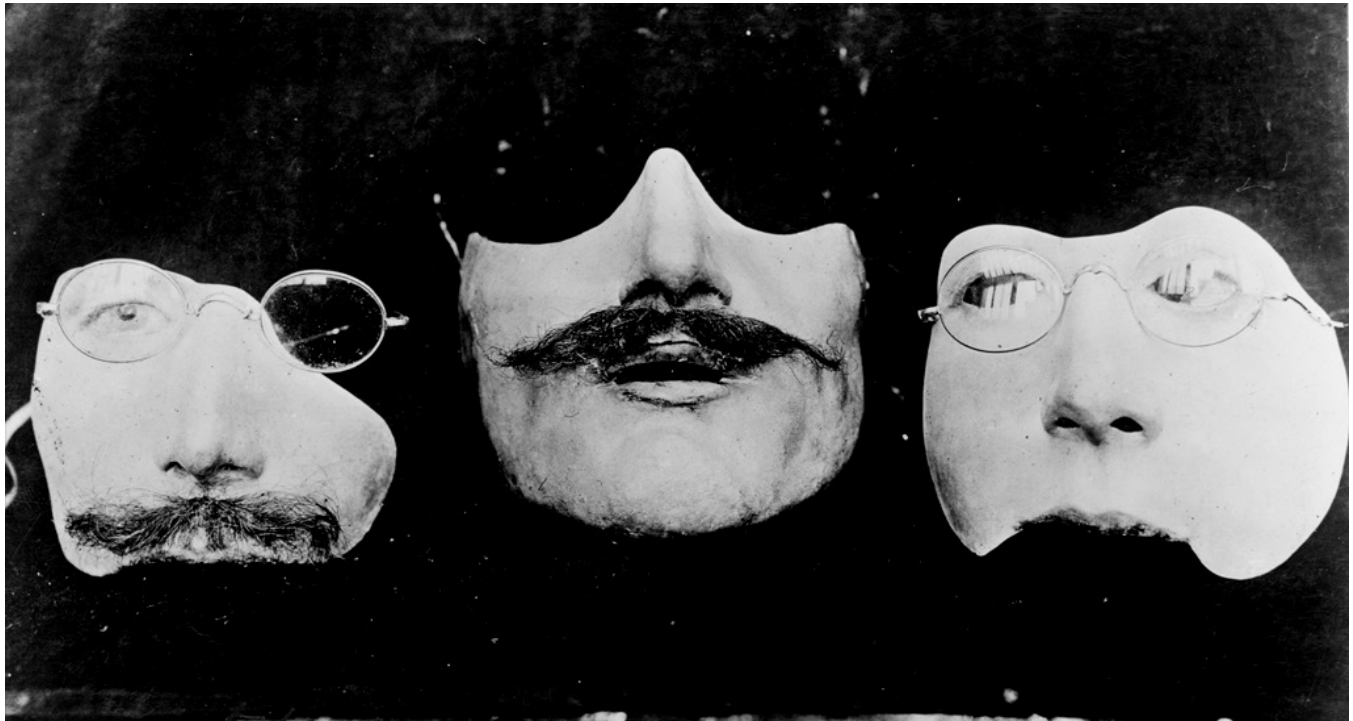


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A horror story, the face is a horror story.
– Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*

Introduction

It is unexpectedly Edgar Allen Poe who will accompany our investigation into World War I-era portrait masks. In Poe's short story "The Man That Was Used Up," the narrator is introduced to Brevet Brigadier General John A. B. C. Smith. What first strikes the narrator is General Smith's exquisite "bodily endowments," but what perplexes him is that the general appears to owe his "remarkable[ness]" to more than his fine features. Indeed, the general exudes a certain something that eludes the narrator altogether (40-41). Only at the end of the story does the narrator unravel the mystery. After the general's servant attaches to a squeaky-voiced "bundle" one prosthetic body part at

a time—from leg and arm to eye and palate—the narrator concludes that the general was "*the man that was used up*" (46-48). It is curious that the narrator arrives at that conclusion, for the scene actually points to a different one. Rather than used up, the general was remade, the fate of many war veterans in that century and the next.

A case in point is the Great War, which cost many men their arms, legs, and faces. Soldiers in the trenches received such strong artillery blasts that they were especially susceptible to facial injury. In fact, according to one estimate, some 280,000 British, French, and German soldiers suf-



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ferred from lasting facial disfigurement (Gehrhardt Men 5).¹ As modern warfare took both life and limb at unparalleled levels, the medical profession, especially the nascent field of facial reconstructive surgery, struggled to meet the challenge. “Fortunately for the human race, however,” the *Scientific American* remarked in 1918, “surgery has easily kept pace with the destructiveness of warfare” (“New Faces” 383). Yet, in so many cases, surgeons could go only so far in restoring the disfigured face.²

Sculptors came to their aid. As S. Squire Sprigge declared, “When all the efforts of plastic surgery fail to accomplish their ideal[,] . . . art can . . . step in and cover the missing features with a mask so deftly made that in many instances it will escape casual detection” (202). Sprigge had in mind Francis Derwent Wood, a sculptor who opened the Third London General Hospital’s Masks for Facial Disfigurements Department around 1916. Following in Wood’s footsteps a couple of years later, sculptor Anna Coleman Ladd opened the American Red Cross’s Studio for Portrait Masks in Paris. Although a small minority of disfigured veterans wore portrait masks, Wood and Ladd garnered the attention of the press and the medical establishment. With some minor differences, they followed a similar mask-making process. In brief, Wood and Ladd took plaster casts of their subjects’ disfigured faces and, on those casts, reconstructed lost parts of the face in consultation with pre-injury photographs and other sources. Then they treated the casts with galvanized copper and silver, a step that yielded light-weight masks. Finally, they painted the masks and supplemented them as needed with, for example, prosthetic eyes, artificial facial hair, and even eyeglasses, which allowed the artists to fasten the masks discretely to the head.³ No longer “a horror to themselves, to their families, and to their friends,” as Katherine de Monclos called the disfigured, masked men were given a new lease on life (158).

If Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari had witnessed those disfigured faces, they too would have called them a “horror”—but not the same ones. Rather than disfigured faces left exposed, it is precisely ones masked to look normal that these theorists would have found so horrific. In *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, they ex-

plain that a particular “assemblage of power” activates “the abstract machine of faciality,” which produces the face at the meeting point of signification and subjectification. At that juncture, the machine organizes the face’s features and marks its conformity to or deviation from cultural standards of normality (167-70, 175-82). While it is unlikely that Deleuze and Guattari had the portrait mask in mind, the latter nevertheless provides a compelling case of “the social production of face,” for the mask, in both design and use, reveals many of the social processes that faces, natural and prosthetic alike, undergo (181).

Applying Deleuze and Guattari’s insights to WWI-era portrait masks, this essay delineates those processes, some hitherto undertheorized by scholars of portrait masks. In so doing, it enriches and complicates the claim advanced by some of those scholars that the face is “a primary signifier of identity” (Powell 606).⁴ This essay begins by explaining that, as a prosthetic device, the portrait mask served as an integral part of the face. As both organic and inorganic, a veteran’s face attested to the status of any face as social product rather than natural given. From that vantage point, this essay then analyzes the symbolic materials from which the artists reconstructed war veterans’ faces and the social situations in which veterans and others recognized those faces. Collectively, these dimensions of facial reconstruction confirm Deleuze and Guattari’s contention that “[t]he face is a politics” (181). Building on that proposition, this essay concludes by meditating on the theoretical stakes of “dismantl[ing] the face” (171). Only in so doing can we resist the standards to which faces are expected to conform.

Giving Countenance

The portrait mask served as both aesthetic object and prosthetic device. Although the mask’s aesthetic features will eventually preoccupy our attention, it is to the mask’s prosthetic function that this essay now turns. Paul B. Preciado offers two perspectives on that function. From one perspective, “the prosthesis is an artificial substitute for the living organ, an imperfect supplement, and a mechanical copy.” From the other, “it is . . . the modification and the development of a living organ with the help of a technological supplement” (135-36). Following Preciado’s lead, this



section leans on the second perspective without abandoning the first. In so doing, it sets the groundwork for recognizing the face not as a natural fact but as a social artifact, the outcome, that is, of “social production” (Deleuze and Guattari 181).

Many war-era publications subscribed to the first perspective. For example, Grace Goulder enthusiastically claimed that “there is no part of the human face Mrs. Ladd has not supplied” (qtd. in “Living Sculptures” 25; emphasis added). However, another period article cautioned that a portrait mask would never “grow into the face” or replace surgery but would only “supplement the surgeon’s work” (“Woman Who Remade”; emphasis added).⁵ Wood painted an even more realistic picture: “To wear an artificial *substitute* for any feature must necessarily be always a burden . . .” (951; emphasis added). *Supply*, *supplement*, and *substitute*—these three words described the portrait mask as a device compensating for missing, disfigured, or inadequately reconstructed facial features. Veterans who understood their masks as such likely treated them as external objects to take on and off as needed. As Dr. L. Dufourmentel explained, masks posed enough problems that disfigured veterans occasionally put them aside at work or at home (231).

However, other period documents suggested that a portrait mask was more than a supplement or a substitute. For instance, a journalist claimed that Ladd’s masks appeared “so natural” that, in comparing them with pre-injury photographs, “the casual observer ha[d] difficulty . . . distinguish[ing] which wears the artificial face” (“Sculptress Helped Remake”). Ward Muir, a hospital staff member who observed Wood’s craft, ran into the same difficulty. Examining an “after” photograph of a man who had lost an ear, he could hardly distinguish the natural ear from “the spurious one” designed by Wood (753). Of course, those testimonies came from some of the artists’ enthusiastic supporters, but their comments nevertheless implied that, in blending seamlessly with the face’s intact features, the portrait mask had effectively become part of the face. It was not just onlookers but some veterans themselves who regarded the masks as such. According to Monclos, Ladd’s masks were affixed so securely to the face that a man could

find “childish pleasure in pulling and stroking his mustaches while sauntering down the street” (159-60).

Collectively, both sets of documents above confirm Preciado’s contention that “[i]t becomes impossible to stabilize the prosthesis, to define it as mechanical or organic, as body or machine.” This is the case, in part, because a prosthesis can be just as easily removed from the body as it can be smoothly integrated into it (134-35). Applying Preciado’s insights to the matter at hand, we can reimagine the face as a set of organic and inorganic materials that can be integrated, altered, and removed as necessary. Thus, rather than a solely natural substance that changes usually only with age, the face is a partially artificial, even malleable form shaped by social circumstance.

The early twentieth-century portrait mask, which inspires that redefinition of the face, shared with other technologies two fundamental roles. According to Preciado, one role of any technology is to “ensure the reproduction of specific socioeconomic structures” (138). The portrait mask fulfilled that purpose by facilitating veterans’ social reintegration. As scholars have explained, medical institutions and personnel, prosthetics designers and manufacturers, and government pension agencies, among others, sought to rehabilitate and reintegrate the war wounded, masked and unmasked, by preparing them to find productive work and to resume other conventional masculine roles such as husband and father.⁶ While scholars have fruitfully explored those efforts, less attention has been devoted to “the production of subjectivity,” another role that technology plays as it integrates with the body (135). The next two sections of this essay bring that role into focus.

Face Value

According to Deleuze and Guattari, “There is no significance that does not harbor the seeds of subjectivity; there is no subjectification that does not drag with it remnants of signifier” (182). Building on that premise, this section turns to subjectivity by way of the symbolic materials on which Wood and Ladd drew to design their masks. Those materials included conversations between artist and disfigured man, informal studies of the latter’s intact body parts, and, if available, photographs of him taken prior to the war. Os-



tensibly, the artists used those sources first to recover the pre-injury face and the personality that it had formerly revealed and then to restore them both on the portrait mask. However, they actually accomplished something quite different. In reconstructing the face in complex, concrete social situations, they engaged in “the social production of face” (Deleuze and Guattari 181).

From the extant archives, we know some about Ladd’s conversations and body studies. During “long talks,” the disfigured men “unconsciously reveal[ed] their hearts’ very psychology, by which means [Ladd was] able to impart something of the former expression.” “[B]ased largely on the knowledge of the inner man,” she gave his eyes, for instance, an appropriate “expression, whether gay, pensive, tender, or energetic” (Monclos 159). Those conversations provided Ladd an opportunity to examine “all the features of the man which indicat[e]d his character and personality—finger tips, ear lobes, and so on.” With that information, she “g[a]ve [him] back his personality” (qtd. in King 1). Taken at face value, those details imply a straightforward process of facial reconstruction. Through their words and bodies, the disfigured men revealed their personalities. In turn, Ladd “impart[ed]” their former facial expressions on her portrait masks and thereby “gave [them] back” their personalities.

However, this process was more complicated than it might at first seem for a couple of reasons. First, Ladd frequently triangulated her dialogues, conversing with both the disfigured man and his friends (King 1). From the latter, she presumably gleaned additional information about his personality. If, during conversations, a man indicated that he looked like his brother or related that his eyes resembled his friend’s, Ladd invited the brother or the friend to her studio to serve as models (Harper 45). Thus, facial knowledge comes not only from ourselves but also from others who claim to know us or who resemble us. Second, based on her observations and artistic training, Ladd inevitably interpreted her subjects’ features and personalities. Thus, it was not so much that her subjects revealed their personalities as that she effectively produced them while designing the masks. On at least one occasion, she encountered a competing interpretation. After she had completed a mask

for a disfigured man, his spouse returned it, complaining that Ladd had painted his eyes too light of a brown (King 1). Although the record is silent on this point, we assume that the man had earlier accepted the original eye color and later either changed his mind or acquiesced to his spouse’s opinion. Thus, the face is always subject to multiple, evolving interpretations, ones that are never ours alone.

Of the sources that Wood and Ladd consulted, it would seem that a photograph would have provided the best evidence of the pre-injury face. As Muir exclaims, “[T]hat last photograph which the wife or sweetheart coaxed [the disfigured man] to endure develops an unforeseen value! . . .” (749). Despite his enthusiastic endorsement, a photograph’s value stops short of revealing the true essence of the self, the very self that Wood and Ladd presumably aspired to recapture in their portrait masks. This is case, as Roland Barthes explains in *Camera Lucida*, because four competing images of the self coalesce in a photograph: “the one I think I am, the one I want others to think I am, the one the photographer thinks I am, and the one he makes use of to exhibit his art.” Thus, I cannot assuredly identify myself in a photograph, for “myself”—that is, “my (profound) ‘self’”—“never coincides with my image” (13, 12). Moreover, all that others can declare with confidence is that I look like the person in the photograph, a “legal,” factual identity, or that I resemble another photograph taken of me (102). Only in a rare photograph might they discern my “air,” a certain something about myself that exceeds rudimentary identification (107-10). Otherwise, Barthes claims, “no one is ever anything but the copy of a copy” (102). Turned into an object, the photographed self belongs more to the dead than to the living (14).

If Wood and Ladd sought to restore to the disfigured face some semblance of its original essence, it is ironic that they would have chosen such sorry evidence. Yet the problem with that evidence was not only the photographed subject’s loss of authenticity but also that subject’s permanent relegation to the past. As Barthes explains, a photograph attests to “*That-has-been*”: to the fact that someone really existed at the place and the time that occasioned the photograph. Because photography invites us to confuse that reality with life, we fall into the misconception that



the photographic subject is alive when, in fact, the latter, by virtue of its pastness, has effectively joined the dead (76-80). Thus, whenever we view a photograph, we witness a veritable “return of the dead”—but only as long as the photograph remains extant (9). Like the subject that it captures, photographic paper itself is ephemeral (93-94).

The photograph owes many of those features to the effects of mechanical reproduction. In a seminal essay on the matter, Walter Benjamin explains that by 1900 mechanical reproduction had advanced so far that art, notably photography, had undergone a complete transformation. Earlier art forms emerged from fixed points in time and space; bore characteristics of originality, authenticity, and durability; and played a role in traditions and rituals. By the turn of the twentieth century, however, mechanically reproduced art, distinguished by its ephemeral qualities, transcended spatial-temporal boundaries as it became frequently exhibited. In short, modern art had lost its “aura” and had done so at the expense of the face that photography, at an early stage of the medium’s development, had nostalgically sought to capture on paper (218-26).

It would seem that Wood and Ladd hoped that their portrait masks would compensate for the shortcomings of photographic evidence. After all, they custom-made rather than mechanically reproduced their masks (Feo 22; Biernoff 680), and Ladd not only took special care to render the “air” of her subjects’ eyes but also touted the masks’ “lifetime” “durable[ness]” (qtd. in King 1). However, period documents and other evidence partially undermined those efforts and claims. According to some articles, Ladd’s masks “copied” and “reproduc[ed]” the face as it appeared in pre-injury photographs, and Wood’s masks “counterfeit[ed]” missing facial features (“Artist Made Masks”; “Dr. Ladd and Wife”; “Mending the Broken Soldier” 9). In so doing, their masks confirmed, as Barthes contends, that “no one is ever anything but the copy of a copy” (102). In addition, Wood and Ladd displayed before-and-after casts of the disfigured men alongside before-and-after photographs, and the masks eventually deteriorated over time, requiring periodic restoration if not replacement altogether.⁷ Thus, the

portrait masks—as reproduced, exhibited, and ephemeral objects—replicated some of the very problems of the medium on which they were often based.

In counteracting the medium’s limitations, the artists also sought to reanimate the photographs’ pre-injury faces. Describing Wood’s almost miraculous results, Muir declared, “It comes to pass in the fullness of time that a plaster likeness emerges of the man not as he is but as he was . . .” (751, emphasis added). Despite Muir’s enthusiasm, those aspirations ultimately yielded unsatisfactory results. In wearing “electroplated snapshots of [their] faces untouched by war” (Feo 24), disfigured veterans reclaimed “un soi-même qu’ils ne sont plus, et qu’ils ne seront jamais plus” (“a self that they [were] no longer, and that they [would] never be again”; my trans.; Ackerman 18). Moreover, no eyewitness could ignore the masks’ expressionless and inanimate qualities.⁸ “[I]f the faces themselves [were] not exactly alive,” conceded an article in *The Literary Digest*, “the mutilated soldiers who w[ore] them [were] . . .” (“Living Sculptures” 24). Both dead and alive, these masked men joined the ranks of revenants.

Encountering those revenants in the streets, onlookers might have experienced the uncanny. This essay is not the first to make that claim—albeit for a different reason. According to Katherine Feo, portrait masks promised to hide the brutalities of war. However, because they actually intimated the very war wounds that lay beneath, the masks incited the uncanny, an experience that Sigmund Freud defined in a famous post-war essay by referencing Schelling: “[E]verything is *unheimlich* that ought to have remained secret and hidden but has come to light” (Feo 18, 25; Freud 200).⁹ Although that theory is certainly plausible, it is just as likely that the masks invoked the uncanny not by recalling wartime violence but by projecting prewar faces. In so doing, the masks staged the “quasi-résurrection” of an older version of the face, one that should have stayed in the past but nevertheless returned to life (Ghilini).

It would be all too easy to take the preceding discussion as an indictment of Wood’s and Ladd’s admirable but ultimately flawed attempts to reconstruct the face. That is not the point. For all its deficiencies, the portrait mask ac-



tually offers some important insights into “the social production of face” (Deleuze and Guattari 181). Rather than restoring the essential, abiding characteristics of the face as well as the personality that it formerly displayed, the portrait mask foregrounded the construction of the face in concrete social situations. The symbolic materials that contributed to the mask’s design came from various sources and refracted the newly constructed face with multiple, sometimes conflicting perspectives.

Those insights notwithstanding, the portrait mask’s greatest limitation lay in its static qualities. Usually only the mask’s inevitable decay and occasional restoration subjected it to change. However, “the social production” of most faces is not a one-time proposition, a point that Deleuze and Guattari suggest when they address the productive and transformative processes of “the abstract machine of faciality.” “You don’t so much have a face as slide into one,” they write, implying the face’s gradual formation over time (177). Despite the portrait mask’s typically static qualities, we nevertheless detect some evidence of its ongoing construction when, for example, the woman returned her spouse’s mask for alteration. Born out of interaction with spouse and artist, her request, however exceptional and limited, put into motion the face’s potential revision over time.

Facial Recognition

Once Wood and Ladd completed a portrait mask, a crucial step remained. For the mask to fulfill its purpose, the disfigured veteran was obliged to recognize it as (part of) his face, and so were his family and friends. As Gehrhardt remarks, “Being recognized by other people, especially relatives, was crucial to the disfigured man’s psychological recovery” (“Gueules” 273). By all accounts, these men embraced their newfound faces. Ladd related a moment when, in creating a mask, a disfigured man finally declared, “C’est moi” (qtd. in King 1). And Ghilini imagined the joy that a masked man must have felt when, looking at himself in the mirror, he saw “l’image familière.” Although those anecdotes distilled an important moment in a disfigured soldier’s life, they nevertheless passed over multiple complexities: the psychical processes of self-recognition as well as the abstract machine’s mechanisms of

social recognition. It is to those complexities that this essay now turns.

The anecdotes above suggest that these men participated in a successful reenactment of “the mirror stage,” a fundamental phase in identity formation. Outlining the mirror stage’s salient features, Jacques Lacan posits a hypothetical moment when an infant, having joyfully surmounted human or other support, identifies with its reflection in a mirror. This stage occurs as the infant makes the transition from fragmentation to illusory wholeness on the way to social alienation (1-4). That primordial moment was reactivated when disfigured veterans looked at their masks on display or in a mirror and once again recognized themselves as whole. They did so with the assistance of artists who, in presenting the masks, anticipated and facilitated the process of self-recognition.

That process compensated for veterans’ earlier confrontations with their fragmentation. Describing a formerly “wholesome” soldier who inevitably looked at himself in a mirror, Muir writes the following: “a gargoyle, and a broken gargoyle at that—the only decent features remaining being perhaps one eye, one ear, and a shock of boyish hair . . .” (746). Comparing that almost ubiquitous incident in a disfigured veteran’s life to a parallel stage in child development, Sophie Delaporte hypothesizes the man’s initial responses to his disfigurement, responses that we can productively rearrange in chronological order. First, in holding a mirror to his face, the disfigured soldier sensed a discrepancy between his former face and his current disfigurement, which he struggled to recognize as his own. As a result, he experienced trauma and, in rare cases, succumbed to schizophrenia or suicide. Second, he placed himself in the position of the other, in most cases eventually accepting his disfigurement from that vantage point (130-34). The other, although unspecified by Delaporte, could have been modelled on other wounded men in the hospital, who were grappling with their own disfigurement, or on members of the hospital staff, who were presumably not disfigured.

In both responses, the disfigured soldier occupied the position of a (formerly) non-disfigured individual. Either the



man confronted his disfigurement from the perspective of his pre-disfigured self, or he identified with another disfigured man looking at him from the same perspective or with a hospital staff member gazing at his disfigurement. Occupying that position may have enabled the man eventually to accept his disfigurement, as Delaporte suggests, but it also foreshadowed reactions from others. For example, Muir confessed, “I feared . . . to meet [the disfigured man’s] eye. . . . I feared that inadvertently I might let the poor victim perceive what I perceived: namely, that he was hideous” (746). Accounting for such a response, Lennard Davis explains, in an important application of the Lacanian mirror stage to disability studies, that many non-disabled individuals feel revulsion when they encounter a disabled person. They do so because the latter’s fragmentation signals the failure of the mirror stage while recalling their own fragmentation, a former stage that they would prefer to repress (138-42).

Given those early confrontations with his disfigurement, it should come as no surprise that, masked in public, a disfigured man responded ambivalently to social encounters. On the one hand, he apparently welcomed those interactions in the artist’s studio or with family and friends. If he strolled the streets with his mask on, according to Ladd, his friends would have recognized him (King 1). Those street encounters afforded more than a confirmation of his newfound identity. Whenever someone greets a friend on the street, Louis Althusser explains, ideology is at work. Through that everyday ritual, “ideology . . . interpellates individuals as subjects.” In the process, it reaffirms their places in the relations of production that are reproduced on that occasion (172-75, 182-83). In other situations, however, a disfigured man hoped to circumvent the customary practices that would have otherwise facilitated his reintegration into the social order. According to Ladd, one man, masked for the first time in public, exclaimed, “[O]n ne me regarde plus” (“[N]o one looks at me anymore”; my trans.; qtd. in Ghilini). He must have felt like the “tall[,] handsome fellow” who, when he strolled the streets masked for the first time, avoided looks of “horror” (Monclos 160).

At first glance, it might seem that, in avoiding notice, a masked man impeded his social reentry. However, he actually participated in a subtler form of social recognition and integration than the one described by Althusser. According to Sander Gilman, an individual who undergoes aesthetic surgery aspires to the “happiness” that “exists in crossing the boundary separating one category [of individuals] from another.” Gilman assigns that goal to aesthetic rather than to reconstructive surgery and argues, moreover, that a Great War veteran whose face was reconstructed could never pass except as “war-wounded” (21, 24-25, 168). However, Gilman’s insights nevertheless apply to a veteran who underwent reconstructive surgery and wore a mask to enhance the results.¹⁰ That veteran too hoped to pass as a non-disfigured member of society and, as Ladd explained, “derive a bit of happiness out of life” (qtd. in King 1). To achieve that happiness, he had to become “(in)visible,” thereby avoiding untoward stares. But as Gilman’s neologism suggests, his invisibility would have rendered him paradoxically “seen but not seen.” In passing, he depended on others recognizing him, even if silently, as members of the target group. “*Silence is,*” as Gilman puts it, “*acquiescence*” (42, 26).

When non-disfigured passersby tacitly accepted a disfigured man as one of their own, they acted on behalf of “the abstract machine of faciality.” According to Deleuze and Guattari, the faciality machine operates by way of two binaries. First, the machine places the face in one category or another: man or woman, for example, or rich or poor (176-77). When a period article indicated that, thanks to their “new features,” “men with smashed faces” “look[ed] once more like human beings,” it engaged in a bifurcation between human and non-human (“Woman Who Remade”). Second, the machine determines if the face passes as a member of a given category, assessing the degree to which it deviates from the norm (177-78). The modern definitions of *normal*, *norm*, and the like came into the English language around the mid-nineteenth century (Davis 24). By World War I, the word had achieved enough currency that a period article could confidently claim that the portrait masks “restored to the injured a normal appearance” (“American Sculptor’s”).



That journalist likely associated normality with classical standards. Updated for the modern world, classicism valorized in the male body strength, symmetry, and wholeness. Those features, actively promoted by post-war reconstruction efforts, promised to surmount the physical debilitation caused by the war (Carden-Coyne 160-212). Influenced by classical models, Wood and Ladd likely infused those ideals into their portrait masks (Carden-Coyne 137-39; Powell 610-12). In particular, Powell notes, "Ladd's masks featured the square jaws and finely chiselled features of classic statuary, aligning wearers aesthetically with the masculine ideal" (610).

A case in point is *The Young Christ*, a sculpture designed by Ladd. She credited her earlier study of "the Christs and the saints of the greatest sculptors of the ages" for preparing her to design the portrait masks. Into her masks, she poured her subjects' "spiritual sufferings" and "unbelievable hope and courage." Inspired by those men, she created her Christ, which displayed "the triumph of spirit over suffering." Unlike the typical Christ, hers exhibited "a robust, muscular[,] and virile type of masculinity," an ideal that she associated with "a regular man" (qtd. in King 1). If other sculptors' Christs inspired her portrait masks, which, in turn, inspired her Christ, Christ's face had become the gold standard against which to measure all other faces. In fact, for Deleuze and Guattari, the face of Christ, routinely rendered as the "average ordinary White Man," epitomizes the normal in Western cultures (178). However, as both source and recipient of inspiration, Christ's face had joined a succession of normal faces. The normal face had become, to adapt Barthes's words, "the copy of a copy" (102).

Conclusion

Once we accept that the normal face belongs to a series of copies, we face the political task of disrupting that

sequence. Only in so doing can we resist the kind of politics that reinforces the norm. Indeed, if "[t]he face is a politics," to invoke the words from Deleuze and Guattari with which I began, so is its "dismantling" (181, 188). The World War I-era portrait mask has provided a provocative case study of facial politics. When the faces of some soldiers were obliterated, they underwent a literal, horrific dismantlement—but certainly not one worth emulating. Anyone who has seen photographs of these men can only begin to fathom their physical, social, and psychological pain. Nevertheless, upon their disfigurement, they faced a choice: they could either wear a portrait mask, conforming once again to facial standards, or expose their disfigurement, thereby deviating from those norms. The men who sought Wood's and Ladd's services hoped to reclaim their pre-injury faces, but for a variety of reasons, most disfigured veterans forsook the artists' masks. In so doing, Powell explains, those men "publicly challenged entrenched ideas about how a 'man' could and should look" (614).

If the portrait mask offers a facial politics unworthy of replication, we must look elsewhere for inspiration. Providing the vocabulary to guide our search, Deleuze and Guattari write of "probe-heads," their obscure figure for what lies beyond Christ's face (190-91). Elucidating this term, Simon O'Sullivan suggests, "A probe-head might . . . be any form of practice—any regime—that ruptures the dominant (faciality)." "It will depend," he explains, "on the specifics of time and place, on the particular materials at hand—and on the concrete practices of individuals" (313). Those practices, whatever they may be or become, will move beyond the restrictive processes of signification and subjectification, "mak[ing] faciality traits themselves finally elude the organization of the face" while "open[ing] a rhizomatic realm of possibility" (Deleuze and Guattari 171, 190).

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NOTES

1. Gehrhardt derives this statistic from another source. For brief but helpful discussions of modern warfare practices and technologies in relationship to the number of disfigured soldiers, see, for example, Lubin (8), Romm and Zacher (104), Mitchell (38-39), Alexander, Feo (17-19, 25), Biernoff (666), Ackerman (6), Gehrhardt (Men 3-5; "Gueules" 267), and Delaporte (30-31).
2. The following have shaped my understanding of period facial reconstructive surgery: Lubin (8-9), Alexander, Feo (19-21, 25), Crellin (80), Biernoff (672-73, 677), Carden-Coyne (93-108), Powell (606), Ackerman (5, 7-10), Gilman (157-68), Gehrhardt (Men 5-8, 37-45; "Gueules" 267-68, 270), Mitchell (38-39, 41-42), and Delaporte (85-123).
3. I learned general information about Wood's and/or Ladd's mask-making studios, output, and/or processes primarily from the following: Lubin (5-6, 9-11), Romm and Zacher (104-10), Mitchell (37-45), Alexander, Feo (17, 21-23), Crellin (75, 77-79), Biernoff (677-80), Powell (604, 607-10), Ackerman (10-14), and Gehrhardt (Men 45-51; "Gueules" 271-72).
4. In addition to Powell, see, for example, Biernoff (669, 671-72, 677), Ackerman (5-6), Gehrhardt (Men 14, 25-26; "Gueules" 269-70), and Mitchell (42).
5. Many documents used in this essay come from the Anna Coleman Ladd Papers, 1881-1950, held in the Smithsonian online Archives of American Art. Many of those documents lack bibliographic information. Only when the information is indicated on the documents as part of their original printing is it included in the works cited below. If the information was handwritten on the documents or otherwise inconclusive, it is placed in brackets.
6. See, for example, Preciado (95, 133-34), Mitchell (42-45), Feo (20), Crellin (78-79), Biernoff (670, 675-77), Powell (605-13), Ackerman (18, 20), Gehrhardt (Men 79-121; "Gueules" 273), Carden-Coyne (160-212), and Panchasi (110-18, 122-33).
7. Muir describes the display of photographs and masks in Wood's studio (749, 752-53), and Ackerman discusses their display in Ladd's studio (15). For discussions of the masks' eventual deterioration, restoration, and/or replacement, see Feo (24), Biernoff (680), Ackerman (17), Alexander, Powell (605, 614, 617), and Gehrhardt ("Gueules" 275-76).
8. For discussions of the masks' static, anachronistic, expressionless, and/or inanimate qualities, see, for example, Alexander, Feo (23-25), Crellin (79-80), Biernoff (680), Powell (610-11, 617), Ackerman (18), and Gehrhardt ("Gueules" 275-76; Men 191).
9. See also Crellin (79), who makes a similar point but without reference to Freud, and Panchasi, who applies Freud's theory of the uncanny to prosthetic limbs (111-12, 131-33).
10. For other critics who, drawing on Gilman, address the disfigured man's attempts to pass, see Biernoff (681) and Gehrhardt (Men 9-10, 27, 51).



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