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Authors	Murray, Ann
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Reformed Masculinity: Trauma, Soldierhood and Society in Otto Dix's *War Cripples* and *Prague Street*

Ann Murray

> When the fifth spring of the war was through
> With the chances of peace still close to zero
> The soldier did just about all that was left to do:
> He died the death of a hero.
>
> But war for battle is a synonym
> And the Kaiser was very upset
> That the soldier had gone and died on him.
> Said he: "He shouldn't have done that - yet."[1]
>
> Bertolt Brecht, 1918.

The residuum of the traumatic events of World War I (1914-1918) forced Germany to accept responsibility for the war and grapple with the consequent social and economic challenges, namely severe war reparations, the conversion from monarchy to democracy, and the rebuilding of national pride. Such societal conditions forced a re-examination of the cost of the war to the health and economy of the nation, an issue that took centre stage in debates between liberals and conservatives. Although Count Harry Kessler, one of Weimar Germany's sharpest observers, stated 'we have been the victims of political imbeciles and adventurers, not of great though unfortunate soldiers', the search for scapegoats often centred on the veterans of this first industrialised mass conflict.[2] The initial patriotic zeal of young men to go to war was bolstered by German doctors and social critics' expectations that after decades of inaction, the male body would be revitalised by the physical and mental challenges of combat. However, there was a failure to predict the devastating effects of mechanised warfare on the human body. While it is inaccurate to state that the war left a

whole generation of men unfit for civilian life, its legacy left an estimated 2.7 million soldiers either mentally or physically traumatised.[3] This essay explores representations of disabled veterans in two montage paintings by Otto Dix (1891-1969), *War Cripples: A Self-Portrait (45% Fit for Service)* (further subtitled as *Four of Them Don't Add Up to a Whole Man*), and *Prague Street (Devoted to my Contemporaries)*,[4] both produced in 1920. It examines how Dix's work records one of the major challenges faced by defeated soldiers, that of their perceived failure to emulate the German ideal of masculinity, which would have life-changing consequences for many ex-soldiers. The content of these images locates Dix amongst these veterans who, in an aftermath wrought with feelings of shame, waged a personal battle against diminished pride, and projects the artist's effort to counter negative scrutiny of soldiers, particularly with regard to how the body was expected to survive the effects of industrialised warfare.[5]

A frontline soldier whose tenure included the 1915 autumn campaign near Reims, for which he was awarded the Iron Cross, and the catastrophic Battle of the Somme of 1916, much of Dix's oeuvre is enmeshed with reactions tightly bound in his status as participant in the war. Discussions of the artist's work have tended to omit careful examination of his war experience and how this shaped both his perception of humanity and the cultural environment of the Weimar years, notably Linda F. McGreevy's lengthy study which does not acknowledge the possible impact of traumatic memory on the artist.[6] She describes Dix as a 'bitter witness', in other words a passive observer of events, though he was more specifically a participant in the most concentrated battles of the war, whose work reveals the psychic residue of his frontline experiences. Though he did not suffer disfiguring injuries, his determination during the 1920s to expose the suffering of the maimed ran counter to the general attitude towards the war. In addition, working-class Dix was sensitive towards the

treatment of soldiers of the same social strata, whose fate was strongly influenced by their social background: the working class soldier most often experienced the bloodiest battles first-hand and was thus more exposed to physical and mental injury. However, in the so-called 'pension wars' of the immediate post-war period, both the extent of their suffering and the nature of their injuries was disputed.[7] An analysis of *War Cripples* and *Prague Street* through the prism of the artist's war experience explains not only the stylistic metamorphosis that occurred in his work, but also more fully discloses the significance of the myriad motifs contained in both paintings. These narrate the persistent idealisation of manliness which led to societal misperception surrounding the ability of the human psyche to cope with the catastrophic effects of mechanised warfare, the impact of decisions made by doctors and officials regarding veterans' welfare, and the conduct of the military regarding class and race relations, which deepened the misery suffered by many veterans in the immediate post-war years. This essay argues that contrary to existing analyses, these images were heavily informed by Dix's status of veteran rather than that of post-war observer of Weimar Germany, revealing a profound sensitivity towards the difficulties faced by returning soldiers who most likely best understood their content. Possibly, the so-called 'front generation' were the most appreciative of these works, due to the singular, almost codified nature of their content.

As an ex-soldier, Dix was deeply aware that attitudes toward veterans were in good part influenced by the ideal of *der große Krieger*, the tough, resilient warrior for whom combat presented a welcome test of manliness, and the popular model of German masculinity prevalent before, during and after the war. This model was synonymous with a militant masculinity, defined as a physical, moral and indeed aesthetic ideal: a muscular, well-proportioned body, combined with steely mental resilience and a chivalrous disposition.[8]

Discourses surrounding the idealised male body and militarism emerged in relation to the Battle of Leipzig (1812-14), the largest battle in Western history before World War I, and in which the German kingdoms of Prussia and Saxony, alongside other anti-French forces, effected Napoleon's retreat from German lands and ultimately, his abdication. This ideal became an integral part of military training from the mid-1800s onward in a drive to produce model specimens of masculinity and by 1914 had become firmly ingrained in German culture. It was a model that summoned imagery of a glorious past which mythologised and romanticised the concept of soldierhood, while the use of motifs such as outmoded weaponry were reminders of Germany's triumphs as a warrior nation. The post-war recruitment poster for the Reinhard brigade for example (Fig. 1) shows a tough, muscled soldier's body which references past victories through the motifs of the sword and shield. Despite the loss of the war, militarist ideology persisted in popular media during the post-war years, as Germans struggled to accept returning soldiers' mental and corporeal disabilities.[9] In camaraderie with fellow veterans, Dix challenges the viewer with the reality of soldierhood in the early twentieth century, responding to the ambivalence of a society that failed to understand the extent of veterans' sacrifices and the nature of their injuries.

Dix's images of disabled veterans were highly confrontational to a culture that evidently found the traditional model of masculinity more digestible: not surprising, considering that this model functioned to promote an image of national strength and indestructibility. Dix's pre-war cubo-futurist work *Self-Portrait as Mars* (1914, Fig. 2), presents a strong contrast to his self-representation in *War Cripples: A Self-Portrait* (Fig. 3), exhibited at the Berlin Dada Fair in 1920. The pre-war portrait is the essence of the militant masculinity promoted by the futurists, who saw in violent conflict a path to self-fulfilment: *la guerra festa* ('war as a festival).[10] Filippo Marinetti proclaimed in his manifesto of 1909:

> We want to glorify war, the only cure for the world, militarism, patriotism, the destructive gestures of anarchists, the beautiful ideas that kill... For the dying, for invalids and for prisoners [the past] may be all right. It is, perhaps, some sort of balm for their wounds, the admirable past, at a moment when the future is denied them. But we will have none of it, we, the young, strong and living Futurists![11]

Manifesto fever spread throughout Europe in the years and months before the outbreak of war, exciting a lust for warfare.[12] Marjorie Perloff remarks that war was made to appear as a necessary step towards a newly cleansed world composed of 'great crowds excited by work…of the "vibrant nightly fervour of arsenals and shipyards blazing with violent electric moons"'.[13] In Germany, Marinetti's words, a pastiche of Friedrich Nietzsche's prose, must have carried a particular resonance for Dix and many other young German soldiers who read Nietzsche's work during the first months of the war.[14] Herwath Walden, one of the most significant promoters of the avant-garde in Germany, published futurist manifestos in his periodical *Der Sturm* and promoted futurist art through his gallery in Berlin. The Herbst Salon, held at Walden's gallery in Berlin in the summer of 1913, was the last major international exhibition of contemporary art held in Germany before the war. This new movement, which promised the chance to become an initiator of a revitalised society, and association with the avant-garde, evidently impacted upon the young artist. In portraying himself as Mars, the Roman god of war, Dix renders himself in the futurist style, epitomising a desire which consumed many German youths at the outset of war: a chance to escape the constraints of society and regenerate oneself through the speed and chaos of warfare. Jagged, clashing planes of colour and line fire *Mars* with a violent energy which glorifies the cut and thrust of human conflict, reflecting the futurist exaltation of violent movement over 'stillness of thought'.[15] But by the war's end, Dix had abandoned futurism, announcing his radical stylistic shift by participating in the first international Dada Fair, held from 30 June to 25 August in Otto Burchard's Berlin art gallery. An event that voiced a disgust of warfare, the

Dada Fair was a protest against bourgeois nationalism which dadaists believed caused the outbreak of war, and also a sublation of the existing art market, an *Aufhebung*.[16] To effect this process, the works presented in the Dada Fair were marked by their irrationality and indigestibility. The void between the violent energy of the futurist, almost messianic *Mars* and the disillusioned spirit of *War Cripples* documents the artist's startling ideological and stylistic transformation. Dix now represents himself as a war cripple, with a false jaw to replace his own which has been (symbolically) blown away. The image shows four war cripples, all disabled in some way, walking down a paved shop-lined street. The background is punctuated by cut-out motifs styled as dadaist montage which comment upon the plight of the hapless veterans. Each figure has been 'reconstructed' with wooden and metal prosthetics but it would seem, in concordance with dadaist aims, that Dix's intention was to subvert the message conveyed in countless press photos which celebrated Germany's technological advancements. Modern technology proved highly efficient in the production of death and debilitation but could not rebuild the shattered bodies and minds of war veterans.

War Cripples: A Self Portrait has been widely misinterpreted. Matthias Eberle makes a rather summary conclusion of the image, stating that 'being a vitalist, Dix could not help but see [disabled veterans] with a scornful eye'.[17] More recently, Matthew Biro argues that Dix's painting 'suggests little sympathy for his disabled military cyborgs'.[18] Biro examines the dadaists' attack on the soldier, the 'patriotic militarised cyborg', who conducted war in service of the state. While pointing out that dadaists remained sympathetic to working-class soldiers because they recognised the government's nationalist myths for what they were, Biro's analysis of *War Cripples* is skewed, as he positions working-class soldier Dix as a critical observer. Nowhere in Biro's text does the full, original title of the painting appear which includes the words *self-portrait,* the title given by Dix for his image in Diether

Schmidt's *Otto Dix in Selbstbildnis*, a comprehensive survey of Dix's self-representation in his work.[19] Dix clearly projects his status of war veteran, aligning himself with his co-combatants. Reflecting on his numerous war-related images, Dix commented that he wanted to 'let people know how dreadful war [was] and so stimulate people's powers of resistance'.[20]

The metal jaw merged with human flesh is Dix's bitingly ironic version of the militarised male, in which armour and tissue combine to create a literal 'man of steel'. Dix's subtitle for the image, *45% Fit for Work*, reflects the artist's choleric response to the fact that the same industrial prowess that efficiently shattered bodies during the war now churned out often miserably inefficient body parts which could not restore soldiers' independence. *45% Fit for Work* referred to the rationalisation of war pensions in 1920 with the implementation of a new law, the *Reichsversorgungsgesetz* (RVG).[21] Under this law, pensions were calculated according to the sufferer's level of disability while placing emphasis on rehabilitation to work.[22] Severely limited public resources allowed for little manoeuvrability with regard to welfare payments, meaning that disabled war veterans who could not return to the workforce were forced to compete with civilians for access to economic relief. However, the doubt cast over the masculine worth of these veterans was a factor that profoundly affected decisions regarding the payment of pensions. The 'useless' veteran was considered to be an added financial burden, reflected through the arbitrary use of the RVG in deciding the level of a veteran's disability and thus the value of the pension awarded.[23]

Dix gave *War Cripples* a further subtitle in *Four of Them Don't Add Up to a Whole Man*.[24] The background in *War Cripples* juxtaposes motifs of bodily wholeness with the ravaged bodies in the foreground: a white, outstretched arm, a boot and a profile of a human head, which is placed next to the most horribly disfigured of the wretched group. The latter

illustrates that it was not only through the loss of limbs that veterans suffered, but also through the horror of becoming grotesque. Dix's rendering of the facially disfigured in 1920 was clearly confrontational as images of the 'men without faces' were very rare.[25] There were insistent efforts to conceal those with severe physical injury: the maimed had not been simply healed and reintegrated into society but in many cases, were still hidden away, ashamed and grotesque, in secret hospitals.[26] According to a 1917 order from the War Ministry in Berlin, all physically maimed veterans were to be discouraged from populating the streets, lest they horrify and provoke the public. Following a visit to a hospital for the facially-disfigured, ex-soldier Erich Kuttner, founder of the largest association of disabled veterans during the Weimar years, protested against governmental policy in his article *Vergessen!*:

> How any people have the slightest idea that there are still about twenty military hospitals in Berlin with more than two thousand inmates...and how many of those who know about this have asked themselves how a man's body might look…after two, three, five or six years of medical treatment, despite the fact that they are not exactly fussy when discharging ex-servicemen…The educational trip started with a provision hospital …located in remote loneliness…here one can find people from whom the war has taken the most noble and beautiful part of their body – even if this is a terrible thing to say: the men without faces (…) The uncomfortable existence of these war victims is forgotten…[27]

Within such societal conditions, the full value of *War Cripples* is revealed. Dix shrewdly points to the conceit and hypocrisy of the government, who advertised the industrial prowess of the state through highly visible images of the 'armoured' body: the body made whole again through the addition of sophisticated metal prostheses (Fig. 4), while cruelly adding to the shame of maimed veterans by attempting to conceal their existence. Veterans' identities were reduced to the worth they represented to the medical profession and the market for prosthetics. In concluding his article, Kuttner recalled: '…they show me a collection of face masks of the inmates made when they first came to the hospital. Later on, they will make masks of the patched up faces and add these to the collection for comparison. Why do they

hide these memorials of horror?'[28] Dix's 'armoured' self-portrait is a virulent pun on the military ideal and by signing his name on the metal jaw he identifies himself as the creator, just as the manufacturers of prosthetics brand-stamped their products. The physical grotesqueness of the veterans is contrasted with the moral insolvency of the government who promoted the wealth of prosthetics manufacturers, while forcing disabled veterans into extreme poverty.

Dix's identity of war veteran is revealed most prominently in *Prague Street (Devoted to my Contemporaries)* (Fig. 5), narrating the hostile, thankless environment of post-war Dresden. The picture's narrative tracks the understanding of the veteran 'from inside', an affirmation of Dix's status and kinship with fellow veterans, and alluded to through the image's subtitle which suggests the intimation of a shared experience. Fired with movement, Dix's image situates the viewer as passer-by through the application of a fluid perspective which imitates the interpolative action of the human eye. The shifting gaze of the viewer is directed primarily towards the seated cripple by three implied orthogonals, each of which lead from this figure to beyond the picture space, and also direct the eye from the left to the right-hand side of the image. The viewer is first located behind the standing veteran who holds the cane, beneath whom a strong diagonal, formed by the dog and newspaper fragment, leads the eye toward the seated figure. The second diagonal is formed by the hands and cane of the veteran on the trolley, with the 'exit' diagonal created by the line that leads from the woman's platform heel to the right leg of the seated figure. It is no accident that Dix's composition focuses attention on the seated cripple: while generally representative of an altered if not destroyed masculinity, this figure also represents the working-class veteran forced into destitution by the system and the Jewish veteran who came to be vilified through racial tensions that emerged during the post-war years. Through strategically-placed motifs,

Dix acknowledges the true suffering of fellow veterans while prompting the viewer to consider the cripple's plight.

Prague Street consists of six individuals, three of whom represent war cripples. Two heavily collaged windows occupy the top half of the picture, one which possibly belongs to a wig shop, and the other to a prosthetics shop. Photographs of a nude classical statue and a corseted woman appear as symbols of bodily perfection and provide commentary to the dominant motif of the mannequin, which bears a close affinity to Georg Grosz and John Heartfield's anatomically fragmented mannequin *The Middle-Class Philistine Heartfield Gone Wild* (1920, Berlin, Berlinische Galerie), also introduced to the public at the Berlin Dada Fair. Dix's legless, armless mannequin, clothed in a bizarre corset-like undergarment, is placed next to the motif of the prosthetic leg (Fig. 6). Underneath one of the mannequin's armpits appears a crutch, and on one of the half-legs, devices used to stretch over veterans' stumps are displayed. At first glance, this mannequin seems to be female in form but when one examines the head, it becomes obvious that this is not a standard mannequin. It is difficult to say whether the head is male or female: perhaps the androgynous hairstyle and face reflect the blurred lines between the sexes in the 1920s, of 'feminised' male and 'masculinised' female.[29] But what is most remarkable is the unevenly-textured reddish-brown mark that covers a large portion of the head. It appears to be a horrific injury, as if part of the head has been blown away. This mannequin replicates the male body recast by industrialized warfare, built to model the newly-designed ersatz limbs that will make the soldier's body whole again. Contrary to Annette Becker's analysis that the image is simply dripping with sex, it is more accurately a deftly symbolic reference to the reality of the wounded veteran.[30] Corsets were created to mould the female form, to conform, so that one could wear an acceptable façade. In *Prague Street* it signifies that the returning veteran, whose body is not

fit to be seen, must succumb to wearing a corset or prosthetic limb so that his presence may be tolerated.

The irony here, as Dix makes plain, is that many war veterans could barely feed themselves, let alone purchase expensive prosthetics.[31] The reluctance to award disability pensions even to those with severe physical injury had forced many veterans into pavement beggary. As this is Dresden's bourgeois Prague Street, this prosthetics shop sells only the finest models. But directly below the window sits a war cripple whose only remaining limb, his right hand, is outstretched in begging. A hopelessly inadequate wooden prosthesis substitutes his left arm while two wooden stumps replace his lower legs. The awkward positioning of the figure's head suggests that he suffers from bodily convulsions, the somatic evidence of 'traumatic neuroses' and now generally referred to as post-traumatic stress disorder. Having witnessed or participated in intensely stressful events, sufferers often experience persistent images or nightmares that recall traumatic episodes. Visible symptoms include debilitating shakes, stammering, tics and affected gait, as well as disorders of sight, hearing and speech. In post-war Germany, however, this condition had a moveable meaning: the traumatised were either diagnosed with the listed illness of war trauma, or stigmatised as 'hysterical', a label traditionally attached to women, and which in the case of veterans, described an inherent feebleness that happened to be revealed through warfare.[32] Doctors, in league with state officials, often diagnosed the traumatised as hysterical, declaring that their symptoms had less to do with war traumata than an inborn frailty. In 1918, the leading neurologist and psychoanalyst Ernst Simmel theorised that traumatic neurosis caused veterans to succumb in silent, often unrecognised torment and subsequently declared that he would abstain from according war neurosis the status of 'hysteria'.[33] But two years later he wrote off many such patients as 'pension neurotics', describing their condition thus:

> Pension neurosis represents a kind of inferiority neurosis. The patient values himself higher than he feels he is valued by his environment. He has…in his opinion, performed some special military achievement. He has counted on…a certain promotion which he does not attain. An illness or wound finally raises him above the general mass of the unknown and now the pension is the substitute for the missing iron cross or the lance corporal's button...[34]

More often than not, it was the working class soldier who was branded hysteric and thus work-shy.[35] *Prague Street* describes the class divisions that led to better treatment for officers than working-class soldiers. The destitute veteran doomed to pavement beggary is contrasted with the standing veteran who can afford the more luxurious prosthesis for his damaged but 'superior' body. The used of the term 'hysteria' was also financially motivated. As 'hysteria' was not a listed illness, it assisted officials and doctors in minimising the amount of pensions awarded by finding veterans 'guilty' of cowardice, which, as a misdemeanour of military conduct, would not result in the granting of a pension. Military and state-employed psychiatrists blamed the mental breakdown of working-class 'hysterical' soldiers for losing the war, claiming that soldiers who suffered mental breakdown lacked valour, and influenced by leftist organisations, betrayed steely-willed, loyal soldiers by losing their nerve to fight at the point of victory.[36] This was the medical profession's own version of the notorious *Dolchstosslegende* the legend of an undefeated German army betrayed from within.[37] The decision to award pensions to working-class traumatised veterans was blamed for creating an epidemic of 'pension neurosis in the German working classes'.[38] While not denying the presence of traumatic neurosis, Freiburg psychiatrist Alfred Hoche stated: 'it is not the case…of intentional faking of symptoms that were not there. The individuals are in fact sick [now], but they would be well…if the law did not exist'.[39] As with Simmel's 'diagnosis', Hoche assigns no pathogenic significance to traumatic events. Such a slur on Dix's own social background surely reinforced the artist's disgust. Though the army necessarily operated as a consolidated unit on the battlefield, and soldiers from many social strata had

fought and died together, this fact was conveniently forgotten in decisions surrounding pension payments for working-class soldiers. Traumatic neurosis does not discriminate between class or rank, but destroys all kinds of people in its devastating grip; yet, it was often the reserve of the complex, exhausted middle-class officer, who was considered closer to the heroic male ideal.[40] *Prague Street*'s narrative points to what many soldiers felt at the war's conclusion: a deep hostility and fervent distrust of the military.[41]

On the extreme left, the artificial hand of another veteran is visible. With its fully articulated fingers, this hand is similar to the prosthetic hand in the shop window, suggesting that the wearer is moneyed. This figure is open to interpretation but he seems to be looking down on the seated cripple, not just physically but with an air of superiority. His dog does not hold the piece of newspaper in his mouth, as some writers have mistakenly remarked,[42] but bears its teeth as it does in other images by Dix such as *The Match Seller* (1920, Stuttgart, Staatgalerie), suggesting public scorn, despite incalculable sacrifices. The smartly-dressed, bowler-hatted veteran on the trolley wears a military medal on his lapel and like the standing veteran, has no need to beg. This figure possibly represents the military officer class who, as Peter Gay remarks,

> …had led Germany into disaster, lying to themselves as much as to the world, wasting uncounted lives…yet within a few years this combine had regained its charisma for wide circles of the public and burdened the Republic with the legend of an undefeated German Army stabbed in the back at home by Jews and Communists.[43]

In January 1919, a banner which headed a demonstration by around six hundred men from the garrison in Neiße (Upper Silesia) read 'down with the authority of the officers'.[44] Richard Bessel notes that such hostility was typical of soldiers' attitudes from the time of the

armistice: the military spirit, so celebrated in right-wing political propaganda, was far removed from the general opinion among lower ranking soldiers.[45]

Veterans were further challenged by the increased independence and visibility of women in the social and political life of the state. While independence for many women meant little more than forging a meagre living in the perilous climate of the immediate post-war years, an earnest drive towards female emancipation had been underway since the 1890s and the newly empowered presence of women was engendered by the granting of universal suffrage in the new Weimar Constitution (Weimarer Verfassung) and the election of one hundred and eleven women to the Reichstag in 1919. In the administrative and industrial sectors, women held jobs formerly occupied by men, undermining the association of women with the private sphere and men with the public.[46] These women, to some extent, counteracted the virility of the male stereotype but posed an even greater threat, perhaps, to broken veterans.[47] The attribution of hysteria to soldiers from 1915 onwards was one of the lessons of the war: evidence of hysteria in men further questioned ideologies of natural difference between men and women, and exacerbated the crisis of masculinity.[48] The common view within the German medical profession, notes Paul Fox, that an innate pathological condition accounted for hysteria in soldiers, had a peculiar resonance in German society.[49] In failing to emulate the traditional model of masculinity, the traumatised were shamed not only through the inability of their bodies to withstand warfare, but through the label of hysteria, which further aggravated their sense of emasculation.

Dix's layered commentary continues with the clue of the newspaper fragment which reads *Juden Raus* ('Jews out') and is collaged close to the seated veteran, who is most likely a Jew.[50] The aged appearance of the figure, the hollow eyes and prominent chin were

stereotypical characteristics ascribed to Jewish people by Henri Baptiste Grégoire during the French Revolution and it was this stereotype which prevailed in Germany from the late 1800s onward.[51] Defiantly unrepentant military leaders such as Erich Ludendorff and Paul von Hindenburg implicated Jews in the *Dolchstosslegende*, largely propagated by the military officer class. It was no coincidence that the *Dolchstosslegende* recalled the fate of the heroic warrior Siegfried in the popular German Medieval epic poem, *The Song of the Nibelung* (Die Nibelungenlied) in which the hero is betrayed by Hagen, an enemy within Siegfried's circle.[52] Doubtless, the legend of Siegfried, the epitome of the German masculine ideal, had a particular charge during this period, and it is vital to acknowledge the role of this heroic type considering the specificity of the Jewish veteran's predicament in 1920. Within a culture so obsessed with typology, the creation and power of the *Dolchstosslegende* becomes clear. In post-war years, this view possibly influenced the strong opposition to Jewish neurologist Hermann Oppenheim's theory of traumatic neurosis which stressed the pathogenic effects of traumatic events rather than the secondary mental processes connected with hysteria.[53] As a Jew, his theories were seen as deliberately damaging to the State.[54]

The parallelism of prosthetic limbs, naked women and an androgynous corseted mannequin with the traumatised body, suggests that *Prague Street* is indicative of Dix's embittered response to the fallout of the war in Weimar Germany in which he angrily rejects on every level this culture of masculine and racial typology. While Dix himself was not disfigured, his status as veteran is clear in *Prague Street,* in which he closely identifies with the vicissitudes endured by disabled soldiers and exposes the racial and social dogma of the military. As executor of the image, Dix also asserts the superiority of the soldier-veteran in being able to endure such sights. A participant in a conflict that tested mental and physical endurance, Dix was unflinching in his observation of the wounded veteran, contrary to the

horrified and repulsed public who hastily redirected their gaze. With the composition locating the viewer in the role of passer-by, Dix cannily positions his own image at eye-level in the shop window: a close examination of the fake leg that juts across from the right of the window reveals a tiny collaged photograph of the artist who, as the only figure who returns the gaze of the viewer, challenges one to consider the war veteran's predicament.

In effect, Dix brought the presence of the maimed into art galleries and public consciousness. Through a complex narrative of signs and motifs, *War Cripples* and *Prague Street* communicate a profound empathy and allegiance with disabled veterans, catechising the post-war conditions to which they were exposed. Both works encapsulate the challenges to German masculinity incurred by the war itself and to the attitudes and expectations of both the government and the health profession, whose conduct determined the post-war experience of disabled veterans. The images are, in sum, a declaration of brotherhood and allegiance with those who had little or no voice in the wake of governmental tyranny.

About the author

Ann Murray graduated with a degree in Fine Art from the Crawford College of Art & Design in 2000. It was during her degree year that she developed a specific interest in the relationship between art and society during the Weimar Republic (1919-1933), completing a thesis entitled *The Relationship between Politics, Society and German Film Industry, 1919-1933*. She graduated with an MA (first class honours) in Modern and Contemporary Art at UCC in 2010, focussing on the art of Otto Dix and his experience of World War I in her thesis, *The Traumatic Memory and Legacy of World War I in the Art of Otto Dix, 1914-1934*. In 2012 she was awarded both an IRCHSS Government of Ireland postgraduate scholarship and a CACSSS postgraduate scholarship for her continuing PhD research at UCC, which focuses on the memory of World War I in the work of Otto Dix and the Dresden School. She is currently editing a collection of essays in German Studies for the scholarly publication *Germanistik-Schriftenreihe*, under Professor Florian Krobb, NUI Maynooth.

[1] Bertolt Brecht, *The Legend of the Dead Soldier*, 1918, 1-8, trans. Eric Bentley, *Bentley on Brecht: Songs and Poems of Bertolt Brecht*, Smithsonian Folkway Records, Washington, 1965.

[2] Harry Graf Kessler, *Tagebücher 1918-1937*, Frankfurt am Main, 1961, 26 März, 1920, 214. 'Wir sind politischen Idioten und Abenteurern, nicht großen, unglücklichen Generälen zum Opfer gefallen.'

[3] See Ewald Stier, 'Rentenversorgung bei nervösen und psychisch erkrankten Feldzugsteilnehmern' in Karl Bonhoeffer, ed, *Handbuch der ärztliche Erfahrungen im Weltkrieg, 1914–1918*, vol. 4, *Geistes- und Nervenkrankheiten*, Leipzig 1922, 168–93.

[4] The subtitle is my translation from the German which reads 'Meinen Zeitgenossen gewidmet'. Within the sources consulted, the subtitle for *Prague Street* is referenced only in Diether Schmidt, *Otto Dix in Selbstbildnis*, Berlin, 1978, 74-75, and was given to the painting by the artist in 1920.

[5] Paul Fox, 'Confronting Postwar Shame in Weimar Germany: Trauma, Heroism and the War Art of Otto Dix', in *Oxford Art Journal*, 29: 2, 2006, 251.

[6] Linda F. McGreevy, *Bitter Witness: Otto Dix and the Great War*, New York, 2001.

[7] See Paul Lerner, 'Nieder mit der Traumatischen Neurose, Hoch die Hysterie', in *Pschotherapie*, 2: 1, 1997, 16-22.

[8] For a detailed discussion on the idealisation of militant masculinity in Germany, see George Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars*, New York, 1990, 53-107.

[9] See for example the 1920 issues of popular illustrated periodical *Simplicissimus*, www.simplicissimus.com

[10] Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers*, 55.

[11] Filippo Marinetti translated by James Joll, *Three Intellectuals in Politics*, New York, 1960, 182-183.

[12] Marjorie Perloff, *The Futurist Movement*, Chicago, 1986, 81.

[13] Perloff, *The Futurist Movement*, 89.

[14] A durable hardbound edition of Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra* was distributed to German soldiers in1914 and1915. See Steven E. Aschheim, *The Nietzsche Legacy in Germany, 1890–1990*, Berkeley, 1992, 135. It is generally believed that Dix read either *The Gay Science* (1882) or *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (1883-1885). Matthias Eberle names *The Joyous Science* but does not supply a reference. See Eberle, *World War One and the Weimar Artists*, New Haven, 1985, 41.

[15] José Pierre, *Futurism and Dadaism*, New York, 1961, 3.

[16] See Brigid Doherty, 'Berlin Dada', in Leah Dickerman, ed, *Dada*, Washington, 2005, 87-112. *Aufhebung* (German: repeal) was the dadaist word which described how Dada aimed to affect the art market: Dadaists aimed to offend popular taste by launching onto the market products that ridiculed what Dadaists saw as the meaninglessness of the modern world.

[17] Eberle, *World War I and the Weimar Artists*, 54.

[18] Matthew Biro, *The Dada Cyborg*, Minneapolis, 2009, 163.

[19] Diether Schmidt, *Otto Dix im Selbstbildnis*, Berlin, 1978, 58-59.

[20] Otto Dix, quoted in *Neues Deutschland*, 1964. http://www.neues-deutschland.de

[21] The *Reichsversorgungsgesetz* was introduced in May, 1920.

[22] For a detailed account of the polemic surrounding disability pensions, see Paul Lerner, *Hysterical Men: War, Psychiatry and the Politics of Trauma in Germany, 1890-1930*, London, 2003, 223-248.

[23] Lerner, *Hysterical Men*, 240-248.

[24] Conrad Felixmüller recorded in his writings of January-February 1920 that Dix gave the image this subtitle. See Matthias Eberle, *World War I and the Weimar Artists*, 44.

[25] Bernd Ulrich, '…als wenn nichts geschehen wäre', Anmerkungen zur Behandlung der Kriegsopfer wärhend des Ersten Weltkriegs', in Gerhard Hirschfeld, Gerd Krumeich, Irina

Renz, eds, *Keiner fühlt sich hier mehr als Mensch…Erlebnis und Wirkung des Ersten Weltkriegs*, Essen 1993, 115–129.

[26] Three photographs of facially disfigured veterans appeared in the illustrated weekly *Freie Welt* in 1920 but *Freie Welt* had a very limited circulation. Such photographs did not achieve wide circulation until the publication of Ernst Friedrich's anti-war publication *Krieg dem Kriege*, Berlin, 1924.

[27] Erich Kuttner, 'Vergessen! Die Kriegszermalmten in Berliner Lazaretten' [Forgotten! The War-Crushed in Berlin Hospitals], in *Vorwärts*, 8 September 1920, quoted in Bernd Ulrich and Benjamin Ziemann, eds, *German Soldiers in the Great War: Letters and Eyewitness Accounts*, trans Christine Brocks, Barnsley, 2010, 81-82.

[28] Ulrich, *German Soldiers in the Great War*, 82.

[29] See Patrice Petro, *Joyless Streets: Women and Melodramatic Representation in Weimar Germany*, Princeton, 1989, 79-139.

[30] Annette Becker, 'A Culture of War, Otto Dix', in Philippe Dagen et al, *Otto Dix: Der Krieg*, Milan, 2004, 31.

[31] Dora Apel deals with the dissemination of images of war cripples in 'Cultural Battlegrounds: Weimar Photographic Narratives of War', in *New German Critique*, Winter 1999, 49-84.

[32] Lerner, *Hysterical Men*, 1-3.

[33] Ernst Simmel, *Kriegs-Neurosen und Psychisches Trauma*, Munich and Leipzig, 1918, 5-6.

[34] Ernst Simmel, Sàndor Ferenczi, Karl Abraham and Ernst Jones, *Psychoanalysis and War Neurosis*, London and Vienna, 1921, 41.

[35] Lerner, *Hysterical Men*, 2.

[36] See Jason Crouthamel, 'War Neurosis versus Savings Psychosis: Working-class Politics and Psychological Trauma in Weimar Germany', in *Journal of Contemporary History*, 37:2, 2002, 163-172.

[37] Paul von Hindenburg, 'Dolchstoss', *Stenographischer Bericht über die öffentlichen Verhandlungen des 15. Untersuchungsausschusses der verfassungsgebenden Nationalversammlung*, delivered November 18, 1919, 2, Berlin, 1920, 700-701.

[38] Paul Lerner, 'Psychiatry and Casualties of War in Germany, 1914-1918', in *Journal of Contemporary History*, 35:1, 2000, 15.

[39] Alfred E. Hoche, 'Geisteskrankheit und Kultur', *Aus der Werkstatt*, Munich, 1935, 16.

[40] Showalter, *The Female Malady*, 175. Showalter treats in general the reasoning in both victorious and defeated nations the way in which traumatised veterans were treated according to their social class.

[41] See Bernd Ulrich, 'Die Desillusionierung der Kriegsfreiwilligen von 1914', in Wolfram Wette, ed, *Der Krieg des kleinen Mannes: Eine Militärgeschichte von unten*, Munich, 1992.

[42] Annette Becker, *Otto Dix: Der Krieg*, Milan, 2004, 31; Keith Hartley and Sarah O'Brien Twohig, 'Prague Street', in Keith Hartley, ed., *Otto Dix*, London, 1992, 99.

[43] Peter Gay, *Weimar Culture: The Insider as Outsider*, New York, 18-19.

[44] Archiwum Państwowe we Wrocławiu [National Archive, Warsaw], Rejencja Opolska [Opole Region], no 326, fo 285, Polizeiverwaltung to Regierungspräsident, Oppeln, 31 January, 1919.

[45] Richard Bessel, *Germany after the First World War*, Oxford, 1993, 258-259.

[46] See Raffael Scheck, *Mothers of the Nation – Right-Wing Women in Weimar Germany*, Oxford, 2004. See also Anke Gleber, *The Art of Taking a Walk*, Princeton, 1999, 171-191.

[47] See Beth Muellner, 'The Photographic Enactment of the Early New Woman in 1890s German Women's Bicycling Magazines', in *Women in German Yearbook*, 22, 2006, 167-

188; Marianne Weber, 'Die Besonderen Kulturellen Aufgaben der Frau', [The Special Cultural Mission of Women], in *Frauenfragen und Frauengedanken, Gesammelte Aufsätze*, Tübingen, 1919, 238-262; Patrice Petro, *Joyless Streets: Women and Melodramatic Representation in Weimar Germany*, New Jersey, 1989.

[48] The incidence of hysteria in men was first described by Dr Charles Myers in *The Lancet*, February 1915.

[49] Fox, *Confronting Postwar Shame*, 255.

[50] For a detailed discussion on this subject, see Mosse, *The Image of Man*, 56-65.

[51] Henri Baptiste Grégoire, *Essai sur la Régénération Physique, Morale, et Politique des Juifs* 1875, quoted in George Mosse, *The Image of Man*, New York, 1996, 65.

[52] In Richard Wagner's mid-eighteenth century adaptation, Siegfried bathes in the blood of the dragon he has just slain, as this will give him invincibility. However, a linden leaf which attaches itself to his back prevents the blood reaching this spot, making him vulnerable. The saga was famously brought to the cinema by Fritz Lang in 1924.

[53] Hermann Oppenheim, *Die traumatischen Neurosen nach den in der Nervenklinik der Charité in den 8 Jahren 1883-1891 gesammelten Beobachtungen*, Berlin, 1889.

[54] See Paul Lerner, 'Nieder mit der Traumatischen Neurose, Hoch die Hysterie: Zum Niedergang und Fall des Hermann Oppenheim (1889-1919)', in *Psychotherapie*, 2:1, 1997, 16-22.



Fig. 1. Helmuth Stockmann, *Freiwillige aller Waffen sichert Berlin; tretet ein in die Brigade Reinhard* [*Volunteers with all weapons will secure Berlin. Enlist in the Reinhard Brigade*]. Lithograph, 94 x 71 cm. Berlin: Plakatkunstanstalt Dinse & Eckert 1919. Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, WWI Posters, [reproduction number, e.g., [LC-USZC2-1234].

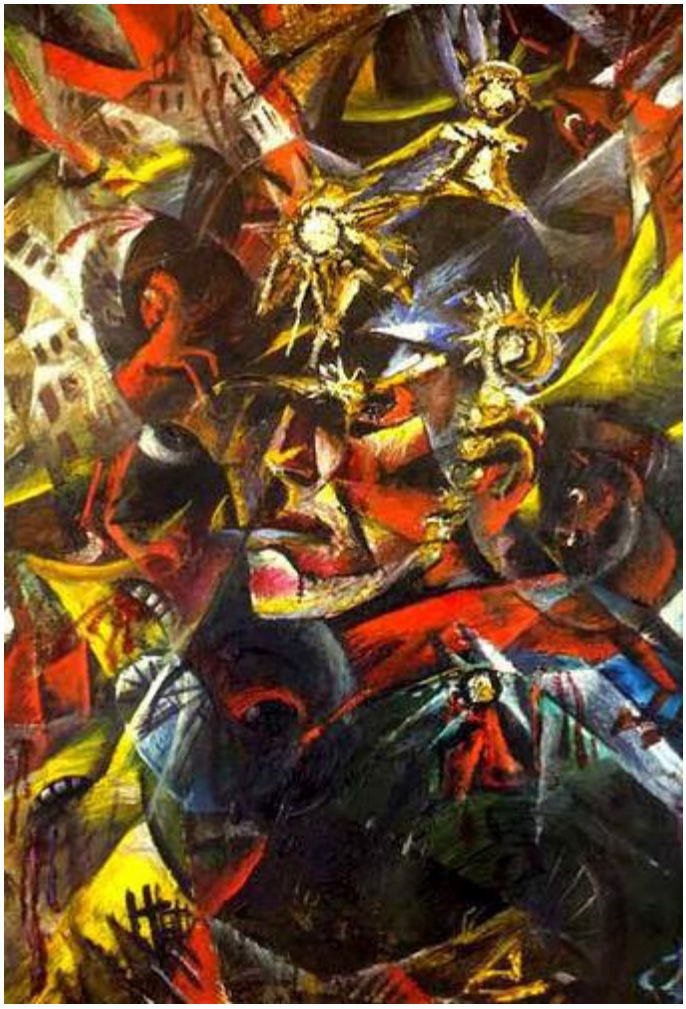


Fig. 2. *Selbstbildnis als Mars* [*Self-Portrait as Mars*], 1915. Oil on canvas, 81 x 66 cm. Haus der Heimat, Frietal. © Otto Dix/IVARO 2011.



Fig. 3. *War Cripples: A Self-Portrait (45% Fit for Service)*, also subtitled *Four of Them Don't Add Up to a Whole Man*, 1920. Oil on canvas, 150 x 200 cm. Location unknown. © Otto Dix/IVARO 2011.

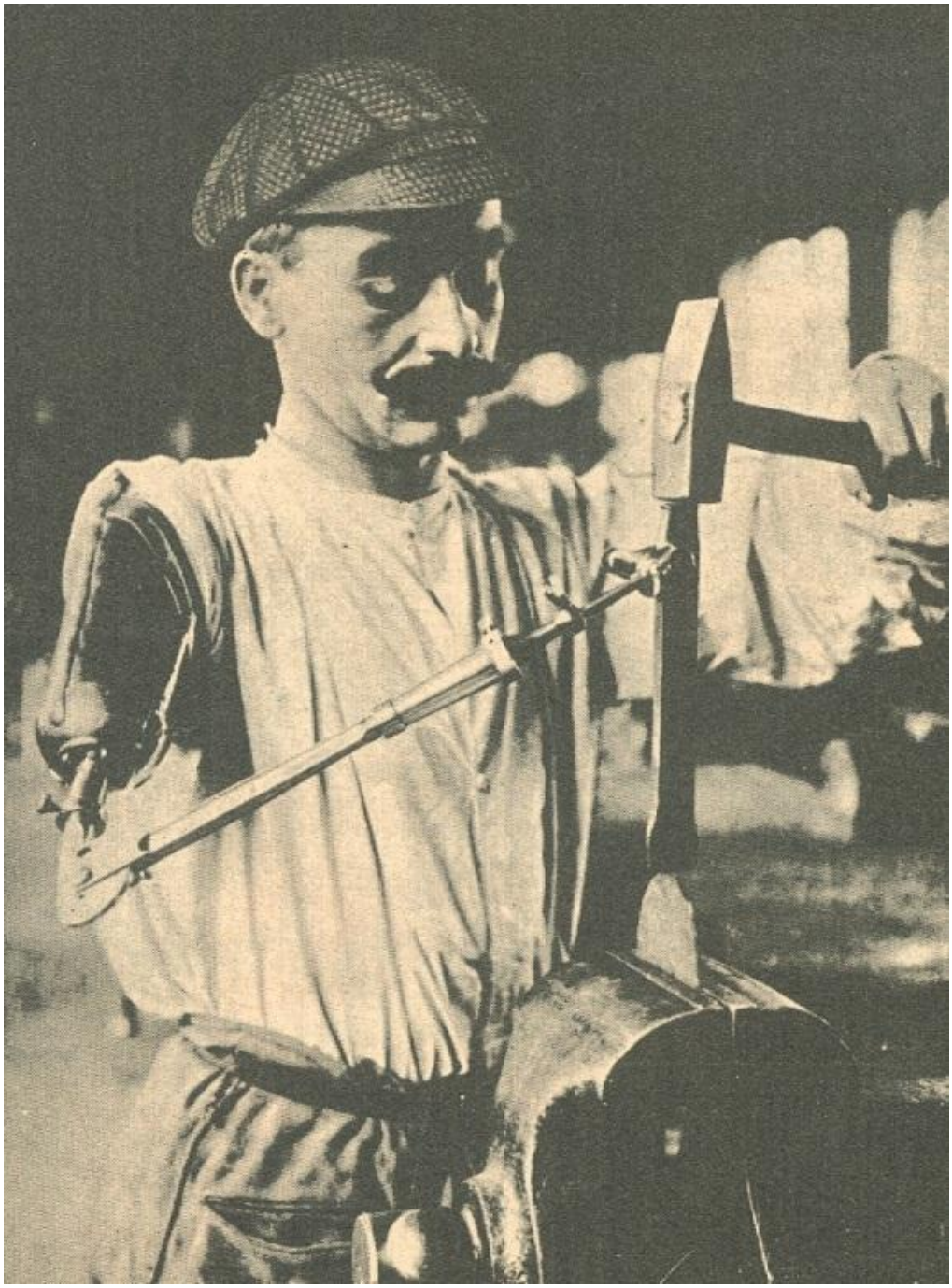


Fig. 4. Ernst Friedrich, "…and the war wounded proletarian at his daily sport", *Krieg dem Kriege!* [*War against War*], Frankfurt am Main, Zweitausendeins, 1980,197.



Fig. 5. *Prague Street (Devoted to my Contemporaries)*, 1920. Oil and collage on canvas, 101 cm x 81 cm, Kunstmuseum, Stuttgart. © Otto Dix/IVARO 2011.



Fig. 6. *Prague Street*, 1920 (detail). Oil and collage on canvas, 101 cm x 81 cm, Kunstmuseum, Stuttgart. © Otto Dix/IVARO 2011.